

THE MILITANT

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INSIDE

A strike wave unfolds
in the United States

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Nationwide strike shuts eight Caterpillar plants

Workers demand end to victimization of union militants

BY PETER THIERJUNG

EAST PEORIA, Illinois — Members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) effectively shut down operations at Caterpillar Inc.'s plants in three states when they walked off the job June 20-21. The strike involves some 14,000 workers.

The outcome of this confrontation has big stakes for organized labor and all working people. It comes in the midst of increasing resistance by workers across the United States to employers' demands for concessions and union busting.

UAW members employed by the corporate giant are determined to turn back Caterpillar's almost three-year drive to break their union. They are digging in for a strike that some say may last weeks. Workers report that supervisors and salaried personnel are being shifted to plants across the country

for periods of at least 45 days to bolster efforts to restart production.

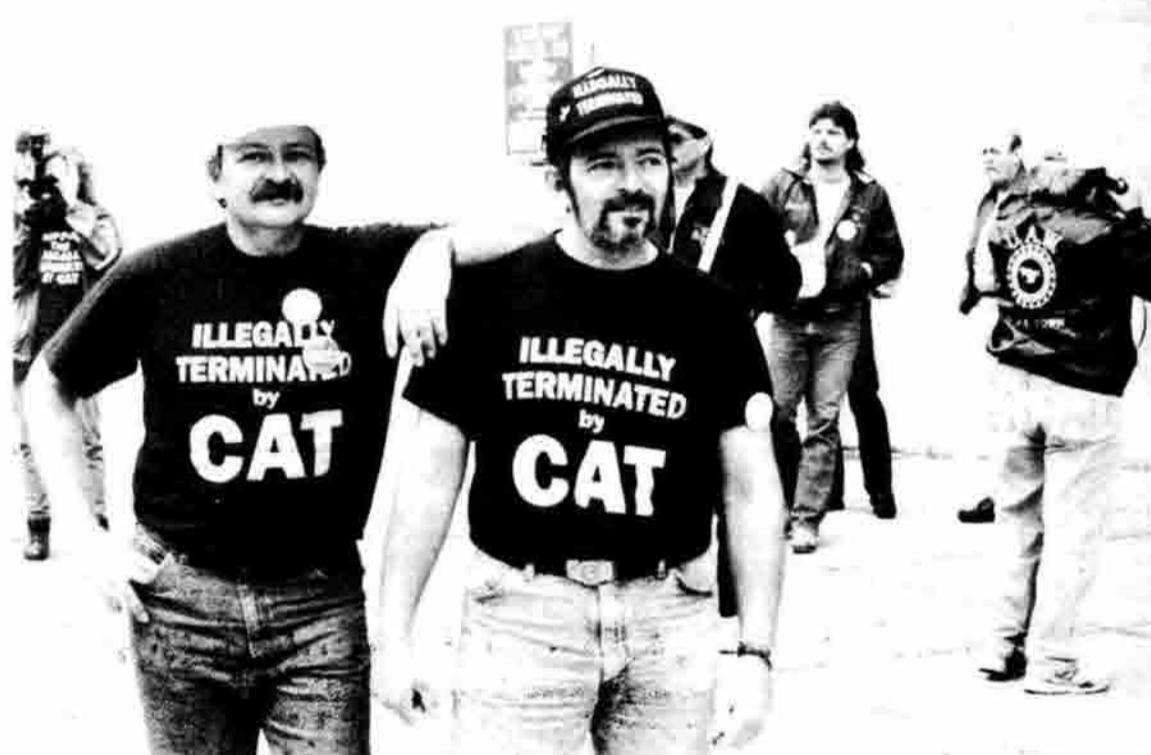
Picket lines are up at eight Caterpillar plants in Aurora, Decatur, East Peoria, Mapleton, Mossville, and Pontiac, in Illinois; plus York, Pennsylvania, and Denver, Colorado. Workers at two other unionized plants in Morton, Illinois, and Memphis, Tennessee, have separate contracts with no-strike clauses and have not walked out.

"We will win the war in '94," is a slogan that some workers recently coined to convey their confidence. Others say that the strike may take down both the union and company "but we will never go back on our knees."

"This struggle goes beyond getting a contract at Caterpillar," UAW member Jim Peacock said. The employers "are trying to lower the living standards of all working people and are trying to destroy unions to do it."

The strike, the 10th unfair labor practice walkout since last September, was provoked by the company's refusal to resolve through negotiations 92 outstanding unfair labor practice complaints. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) filed the complaints against the company.

The NLRB charges that Caterpillar has



Militant/John Sarge

United Auto Workers members fired by Caterpillar for their union activities in Peoria, Illinois. Reinstatement of dozens of dismissed workers is at center of nationwide walkout, which began June 20. Many were fired for sporting buttons or T-shirts, with slogans such as "UAW member in good standing," which management deemed offensive.

since mid-1992 illegally fired workers for union activities, restricted workers' rights, and violated grievance procedures and seniority provisions.

"This struggle is about workers' rights and Caterpillar's continued violations of federal labor law," Jerry Baker, chairman of UAW

Local 974's bargaining committee, told the press. "Our people are simply fed up with it and refuse to take the abuse any longer."

The walkout came after talks between Caterpillar and the UAW collapsed June 20. The company broke off negotiations after a

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Washington flounders on N. Korea sanctions

BY PAT SMITH

The White House is scrambling to rescue its strategy to squeeze the North Korean government after Tokyo, Beijing, Seoul, and Moscow derailed the U.S. drive to impose sanctions. Divisions among the permanent members of the council and representatives of Japan and South Korea have left Washington unable to realize its goal. The U.S. government alleges that Pyongyang refuses inspection of a nuclear facility.

Washington promised June 22 that it would suspend its push for economic sanctions if talks with Pyongyang resume. U.S. officials now say such negotiations are likely to begin July 8 in Geneva.

Tokyo has argued strongly against sanctions. "Stopping the remittances of funds is a very heavy sanction. Our differences are over the weight of the sanctions and the timing," a

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Housing struggle heats up in S. Africa

BY GREG ROSENBERG

Working people are pressing the fight to implement urgent social measures in South Africa, nearly two months after elections brought a majority African National Congress government into office.

The ANC strongly protested a unilateral action by the Johannesburg city council on June 6 to bulldoze 800 shacks in a squatter camp, which left hundreds of people homeless in freezing weather.

Following talks, the ANC-led regional government and the whites-only city council agreed to an immediate moratorium on land occupations on a temporary basis and the immediate provision of housing to those affected.

Some 7 million people live in shanties in South Africa. About one-half the workforce is unemployed. The ANC-led government has pledged to build new housing units and electrify 350,000 homes in the current fiscal year.

Meanwhile, land occupations appear to be growing. The May 29 *Sunday Nation* reported that 100 families at the Ruth First squatter camp near Vredenburg-Saldahna have asked the government to reverse a Cape Town Supreme Court ruling, which empowered local authorities to evict them. In his decision, Judge J. Marais said the people should be treated "with sympathy,"

but warned of "anarchy which would likely result if the courts were to declare it possible for anyone to acquire lasting rights to the land of another by the simple expedient of occupying it and refusing to leave."

President Nelson Mandela's pledge to implement free medical care for children under age six and pregnant women in state hospitals and clinics has brought a rise in those seeking medical attention. The June 10 *New*

Nation reported that at understaffed Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto there is a lack of drugs and some doctors have resigned. Doctors are reportedly seeing 90 patients per day while nurses treat 54 daily.

A handful of whites-only unions have organized to protect their privileged positions against efforts by the ANC and working people to implement affirmative action

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Dollar plunges against yen

BY GREG ROSENBERG

Battered by a lack of confidence by big business in the world economy, the U.S. dollar fell to a post-World War II low against the Japanese yen on June 21. The drop in the world benchmark currency came one day after stock and bond markets worldwide plunged sharply.

Panicky capitalist investors rushed to sell stocks and bonds, as values of paper securities continued to drop. The barons of finance capital reacted to a number of factors as the dollar dropped below 100 yen. Fears of inflation and the possibility of rising U.S. interest rates, worries over the Clinton ad-

ministration's ability to defend the dollar, a wave of strikes across the United States, and Washington's trade position relative to its imperialist competitors in Europe and Asia contributed to the fall.

The sharpening world capitalist economic crisis means that the dollar, despite its dominance in the world market, is itself a less reliable unit for the employing classes worldwide. The currency has no fixed value. Its stability is determined by the confidence of the capitalist class in what the future holds.

"The [Clinton] administration has been

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Tobacco farmers protest tax hikes

Thousands of rebellious tobacco farmers marched through downtown Frankfort, Kentucky, June 9 hurling stalks of tobacco into the Kentucky River to protest proposed cigarette tax hikes. Tobacco is one the state's most lucrative cash crops and is expected to bring in more than \$1 billion this year. Clinton administration officials demagogically claim that the levy will be used to pay for health-care reforms. But tobacco farmers and many workers argue that the tax increase will only hurt working people.

U.S. Army sprayed toxin on cities

The U.S. Army sprayed clouds of zinc cadmium sulfide, a toxic material, over Minneapolis and other cities during a cold war experiment in 1953, according to a public television report. The army had lied about this, saying that the sprayings were part of an effort to provide a screen from the fallout in the event of an atomic attack. They were actually testing how chemicals would scatter during biological warfare.

One of the sites sprayed was a public elementary school, where former students have reported a large number of stillbirths and miscarriages. The material sprayed is a suspected carcinogen.

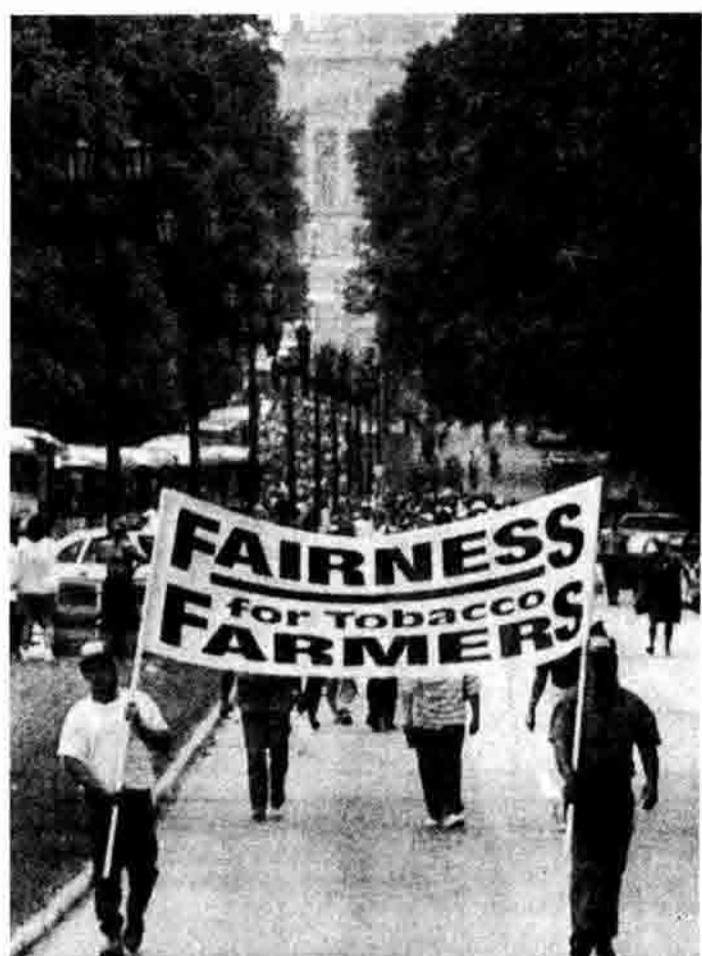
Florida to deport undocumented workers for nonviolent crimes

Florida became the first state to begin deporting undocumented workers jailed for nonviolent crimes. State officials approved a plan in collaboration with federal immigration authorities to deport 113 immigrants who are from 16 countries, most in the Caribbean and Central and South America.

The state government recently sued the federal government to recover money it spends on social services for undocumented workers. The state governments of California and Texas have filed similar lawsuits and hope to follow Florida's example of deporting immigrant workers.

Worker fired over Cuba concert

Maria Romeu, an assistant to the managing director of MTV Latino, was terminated after right-wing Cuban-Americans complained that she helped organize a private tour to Havana for a concert. An official from the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF)



Thousands of tobacco farmers marched in Frankfort, Kentucky, the state capital, June 9 against plans for new cigarette taxes.

called the network, contending that travel to Cuba is immoral and violates the U.S. embargo against the Caribbean country.

MTV said Romeu was dismissed for "us[ing] the company name and resources for a personal matter" and that she was "jeopardizing the company's image."

The concert features singer Carlos Varela, who lives in Havana and is popular among youth in Cuba and among many young Cuban-Americans. Varela has written songs with critical lyrics focusing on the economic and social problems in the country. MTV Latino, which has an estimated 3.5 million subscribers in Latin America and the United States, has been broadcasting a video of Varela, called *Robinson*, since May 23.

Ninoska Pérez, a spokeswoman for CANF,

objected, however. "He is part of the system," she said. "The Cuban government is using Varela to make people think there are changes taking place in Cuba and that you can have internal dissent."

Mexico: peasants occupy offices

Nearly 2,000 peasant protesters have occupied state and federal offices throughout the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, recently. They are demanding aid for poor farmers. The Oaxaca Council of Peasant and Indigenous Organizations initiated the protests June 13 in solidarity with rebels in Chiapas. Many peasants say they will take stronger actions if their demands for restructuring of high-interest farm loans, and for roads, electricity, health clinics, and aid to Indian communities are not met. Occupations include government headquarters in the towns of Huajuapan,

Teotitlán de Flores Magón, Tuxtepec, Matías Romero, and María Lombardo de Caso.

Germany shaken by bankruptcies

Balsam A.G., an international sports flooring company, filed bankruptcy papers June 10. Police arrested Balsam's management board three days earlier on suspicion of committing fraud, tax evasion, and forgery. This is the third major scandal to hit Germany's firms this year. It follows the bankruptcy in April of Jürgen Schneider A.G., and the near liquidation of Metallgesellschaft A.G. in January.

Metallgesellschaft A.G., Germany's 14th largest company, lost \$1.33 billion from its oil-trading operations on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

The financial disasters of the three companies were big blows to Deutsche Bank A.G., Germany's largest commercial bank. It was financially involved in the Schneider and Metallgesellschaft affairs and holds a 15 percent stake in Balsam.

Workers in Romania stage sit-in

One thousand workers in Romania organized a sit-in June 14-16 outside government offices to protest low wages. Brawls broke out when several hundred riot police tried to remove the protesters during a rally. The cops also blocked roads leading into Bucharest to stop supporters from other parts of the country from joining the protest. The rally was organized by the Alfa Cartel trade

union, which represents more than 1 million mainly industrial workers.

Chernobyl haunts Ukraine gov't

The Ukrainian government signed a partnership and cooperation agreement June 14 with several governments in the European Union (EU). The accord is aimed at reaching a common "free trade zone" by the end of the century. But the French and German governments expressed fears about the safety of the Chernobyl nuclear reactors.

Jacques Delors, European Commission president, stressed to the Ukrainian president that his government must sign as an urgent priority the nuclear nonproliferation treaty. Until this was done, Delors said, several states within the EU would be unable to approve the agreement.

Bosnia truce violated

Fighting between the Muslim-led Bosnian army and rebel Muslims backed by Bosnian Serb artillery are endangering a week-old truce that mediators had hoped would lead to a lasting peace. The Bosnian army and rightist Serb forces exchanged artillery fire June 16, near Maglaj, 50 miles north of Sarajevo — the capital of this former Yugoslav republic. This latest scuffle comes on the heels of a campaign of intimidation aimed at forcing non-Serbs to leave northwestern Bosnia, according to United Nations officials.

A local cease-fire around Sarajevo is also cracking as sniper fire killed one civilian and wounded two others. So far, 26 months of war has left tens of thousands dead with no settlement in sight. In mid-June, negotiators from Washington, Moscow, and several governments in the European Union unveiled a new map to carve up Bosnia along nationality lines, with 51 percent of the territory allotted for a Muslim-Croat federation and 49 percent to Serbs.

Israeli government repression

Human Rights Watch issued a 316-page report claiming that Israeli security forces are still using beatings, physical force, psychological pressure, and sensory deprivation to obtain confessions from Palestinian detainees. The report released June 15 alleges the violations persist despite the accord signed last September by Tel Aviv and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The report accuses Israeli doctors and medics of complicity in torture of Palestinians during interrogation by security officers and soldiers.

Khmer Rouge offices shut

After the collapse of two days of peace talks, the Cambodian government June 18 expelled the Khmer Rouge from their offices in Phnom Penh. Khmer Rouge rebels, who have occupied a compound in the capital since 1991, predicted more fighting. A spokesperson for the Khmer Rouge said they would continue to defend zones under their control and would return to Phnom Penh "in a better position."

— MAURICE WILLIAMS

THE MILITANT

Follow unfolding strike wave

From Caterpillar plants to General Dynamics and Leslie Fay factories in the United States, thousands of workers are on strike against the bosses' offensive. And as the postal workers strike in Germany and battles elsewhere show, labor resistance is worldwide. The Militant's worker-correspondents provide the best news coverage and analysis as participants in these struggles every week. Don't miss a single issue!



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French gov't pushes Rwanda intervention

BY SARA LOBMAN

A debate has broken out among Paris, Washington, and other imperialist powers over whether to launch a military intervention against Rwanda. More than 200,000 people have been killed in the central African country and more than a million forced into refugee status, including tens of thousands who have fled to Tanzania, Zaire, and Uganda. The government-organized massacre began after the deaths of Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana and Cyprien Ntaryamira, president of neighboring Burundi. The two government officials were killed when their plane was hit by gunfire April 6.

The French government, which has historically propped up the Rwandan dictatorship, is seeking approval from the United Nations Security Council to send troops into the country. Paris announced it was sending soldiers to the country's border in expectation of UN approval. French military sources said a battalion of 600 infantrymen and 400 support troops currently stationed in the region would be dispatched to eastern Zaire. A second battalion of 1,000 soldiers is on alert, as well.

The French government's moves follow several weeks of debate in the UN Security Council, as the ruling classes in Washington, Paris, and elsewhere try to advance their own conflicting interests. The council voted in mid-May to organize an intervention force of 5,000 troops and to enforce an arms embargo against the Rwandan regime. Just before final UN approval, however, Washington intervened and demanded a scaled-down version of the plan. A 450-member armed UN "monitoring force" is currently in the country.

U.S. president Bill Clinton has stated he will not send any troops to Rwanda. In addition, Washington has insisted that the United Nations pay top dollar to rent and ship the 50 personnel carriers the U.S. government agreed to provide to the UN forces.

'Unilateral action' by Paris

Until recently, the U.S. government even instructed U.S. officials to avoid calling the slaughter in Rwanda genocide. Instead, the State Department and the National Security Council drafted guidelines instructing government spokespersons to say that "acts of genocide may have occurred." Secretary of State Warren Christopher backed off this stance after protests from several members of Congress. "I think [genocide] is the operative term from a legal standpoint," he said.

French foreign minister Alain Juppé claimed that other governments in Europe have agreed with Paris's proposal and that the reaction of countries in Africa was "unani-

mously favorable." So far, however, only the government of Senegal says it will participate. Paris failed to secure any commitments from governments attending the June 17 meeting of the Western European Union. Amsterdam and London said they would provide equipment to a UN-organized force, but would not send soldiers. Italian defense minister Cesare Previti called the French government plan a "unilateral action" and added that Rome had "no intention of taking part."

The Belgian government, which is the former colonial power in Rwanda, has also ruled out sending troops. "France took sides much more than our country," the Belgian defense minister said, "and that's why their initiative should be looked at with the necessary caution."

South African president Nelson Mandela said that it was "out of the question" that South African troops would participate in a military intervention in Rwanda. "Humanitarian aid is something we are keen to provide," he said, reporting that the government had decided to send a field hospital to help treat refugees and would consider additional aid.

Paris supports Rwandan dictatorship

Paris is pushing hard to involve other governments in its military plans. "We cannot go alone, not only for military and technical reasons, but for political reasons," Juppé said on June 16. French government support for the brutal regime in Kigali is well-known.

Habyarimana signed a secret military agreement with Paris two years after he seized the presidency of Rwanda in a 1973 coup. When forces organized by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) launched a war against the regime in 1990, Paris sent paratroopers and arms. It also helped finance an expansion of the Rwandan army from a force of 5,000 to 40,000. French military advisors accompanied Rwandan troops both in training exercises and in armed missions. According to *Le Monde* French officers also helped train the militias that have been responsible for most of the killings over the last two months. The government-controlled bank in France, Credit Lyonnais, granted Kigali the necessary credit for the purchase of arms, later writing off some of this debt.

Paris, which has been quick to deny entry to hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing war and economic devastation around the world, was quick to offer assistance to Habyarimana's family. This included granting immediate political asylum to some of the main organizers of the death squads, including members of the "Reseau Zero," which is accused of carrying out more than 2,000 po-



Rebels of the Rwandan Patriotic Front patrolling east Kigali. Leaders of the front say they are opposed to tribal divisions fostered by the government.

litical assassinations in recent years.

The former South African apartheid regime also helped arm the Rwandan government. Tielman de Waal, executive general manager of Armscor, the agency that for years organized the export of South African-produced weapons around the world, said Pretoria shipped \$30 million worth of rifles, grenades, and mortars to Rwanda over a five-year period starting in 1988.

Rwandan Patriotic Front

Jacques Bihozagara, a spokesperson for the RPF, which has been fighting for control of Rwanda since April, said that his organization was "opposed to French intervention. They would be intervening to protect the torturers," he said.

"The French are not a neutral party to this conflict," said Carlos Mugambage, another RPF spokesperson from Kigali. "They are partly responsible for the chaos and massacres in Rwanda."

The RPF was founded in 1979 by exiles, including many who joined with forces in Uganda to help oust the military dictatorship of Idi Amin in that country in 1979 and who, several years later, fought as members of Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army against the government of Milton Obote. Museveni, who became president of Uganda in 1986, recently denounced the RPF, accusing its members of "torturing and killing civilians." Most sources, including statements issued by United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, say that instances of violence by members of the RPF have been isolated.

Not a tribal war

The slaughter in Rwanda has been widely portrayed as a result of a centuries-old conflict between members of two tribes, the Hutus and the Tutsis. About 85 percent of the Rwandan population is considered Hutu, while 15 percent is officially Tutsi. The Belgian colonial regime favored members of the Tutsi aristocracy as a way to control the Hutu majority. However, since Rwanda became independent, most government positions, including the presidency, have been held by local capitalists who are Hutus.

While most of those killed have been designated as Tutsis, many of the killings have been for purely political reasons. The victims have included thousands of Hutus. People have been killed for being RPF sympathizers or simply because they were not members of the ruling political party, the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development. Some were murdered for refusing orders to slaughter neighbors targeted by local government officials. According to a *Washington Post* report, Rwandan journalists and human rights activists were killed regardless of which group they were registered in.

The two "tribes" share a common language, culture, and territory. There is no "Hutuland" or "Tutsiland," for example. The physical differences often attributed to the two groups — tall and slender for Tutsis and short and stocky for Hutus — do not hold for most of the population, as a result of generations of intermarriage. In an article in the *New Yorker* magazine, Alex Shoumatoff, who recently returned from visiting both Rwanda and Burundi, reports that of the 16 people traveling with him on

a public minibus in Burundi, three would obviously be classified as Tutsis and five as Hutus. The other 50 percent, however, could have belonged to either group.

To maintain the so-called tribal divisions, the government instituted a pass system that identified every Rwandan as a Hutu or Tutsi. By government decree, these tribal affiliations pass from father to child. Several participants at a recent forum in Paris who are from Rwanda explained that the physical differences between the tribes are so small that a market for birth certificates has grown up. It is possible, for example, for someone listed as a Tutsi to pay to get their card changed to Hutu to get a better job or education. The government allocated many jobs at a 9-1 ratio for Hutus. In some families, one child is registered as a Hutu and another as a Tutsi.

Leaders of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, which includes members of both groups, say they are opposed to tribal divisions fostered by the government. "The first task is to make the Rwandans feel like they are Rwandans who have rights whether they are Hutu or Tutsi," said Maj. Gen. Paul Kagame, a central leader of the RPF in a June 7 interview with the *New York Times*.

Rwanda is one of the poorest countries in the world. Life expectancy is 46 years. At least half the population is illiterate. There is some coffee and tea grown for export, but most agriculture is subsistence farming of plantains, cassava, and sweet potatoes. The current slaughter has disrupted the little industry that exists in the country. The tea industry, for example, has come to a complete halt since there is no tea farming or leaf picking, and all of the factories that process the tea are closed.

Government organized massacre

The current massacre is being organized by the Rwandan government and its vigilantes and militias. In August 1993, the Habyarimana government and the RPF signed the Arusha accords, in Tanzania, al-

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Rightist killing in N. Ireland sparks Belfast shipyard strike

BY TONY HUNT

SHEFFIELD, England — Some 2,000 workers at the Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast, Northern Ireland, staged a protest strike June 10 after a fellow worker who was Catholic was murdered by right-wing thugs. Maurice O'Kane, a 50-year-old welder, had been shot in the back inside the shipyard and his body dumped in the hold of a tanker. The Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), a right-wing gang engaged in a terror campaign against workers who are Catholic, claimed responsibility. The workers at Harland and Wolff, 95 percent of whom are Protestant, held a mass meeting after the killing and voted to strike.

The day before O'Kane's killing, three Irish people were acquitted in Germany for the murder of a British soldier and the bombing of a British army base there. The three, who had been in custody for four years, were found not guilty because there was no evidence against them. The British press, however, highlighted the judge's unsubstantiated claim that they were members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). "German court acquits IRA trio of officer's murder" was the headline of the *London Times*. The IRA is involved in a military campaign to end the British occupation of Northern Ireland.

The UVF and another rightist outfit the

Ulster Defence Association, also known as the Ulster Freedom Fighters, support the British presence. They are opposed to any change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, whose state structure is founded on the systematic discrimination of Catholics. These two groups have killed several workers who are Catholic this year. They have also begun attacks in the Irish Republic. In one incident on May 21, the UVF tried to bomb a meeting of the nationalist party Sinn Fein in Dublin. A doorman at the meeting was shot dead in the attack.

Right-wing politicians in Northern Ireland say these killings are the result of the British and Irish governments' attempt to involve Sinn Fein, which supports the military campaign of the IRA, in "peace" talks. Official Unionist Party councillor Jim Rodgers pointed to "Dublin's continuing interference in Northern Ireland" and "the British government conceding to the demands [of Sinn Fein]," as the cause of O'Kane's killing.

Rodgers was referring to London's May 19 detailed response to a series of questions from Sinn Fein. These questions sought to "clarify" the December peace declaration signed by London and Dublin, which called on Sinn Fein to end its support for the military campaign in return for involvement in talks.

Thomas Sankara Speaks

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Farrakhan dominates NAACP summit

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

BALTIMORE — A three-day "National African-American Leadership Summit" concluded on June 14 at the headquarters of the NAACP here. While the event, called by NAACP executive director Benjamin Chavis, involved more than 100 prominent Black political figures, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan politically dominated the proceedings.

Farrakhan, who has received extensive media coverage as a result of his demagogic attacks on Jews and some liberal Black capitalist politicians, had a commanding political and physical presence at the conference. He was trailed everywhere by an entourage, and his security force, known as the Fruit of Islam, surrounded the headquarters of the NAACP and all public events.

The Nation of Islam leader spoke at a packed rally of more than 300 people at the Bethel A.M.E. Church on the first night of the conference. He said he was a "lifetime member of the NAACP" and has given the organization "thousands of dollars." He encouraged others to join.

Farrakhan responded to the protests and the criticism by Jewish organizations and others against the NAACP for extending him an invitation. "This is family business, I'm a member of the Black family," he said. In a comment aimed primarily at criticism from Jewish groups and whites he said, "We don't get into your family business, so stay out of our family business."

"If my rhetoric is too strident, who is better to correct me than my brothers?" he asked to rousing applause.

Who else participated

Other participants in the conference included Rev. Jesse Jackson; Rep. Kweisi Mfume, chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus; Congressman Donald Payne of New Jersey; Betty Shabazz, widow of Malcolm X; Princeton scholar Cornel West; national presidents of the Black Greek-letter fraternities and sororities; the president of the Prince Hall Masons; and the president of the National Association of Black Journalists.

Although the discussions of the summit participants were off-limits to the press and general public, a public meeting captured some political questions often raised in the Black community. The forum was held at a high school auditorium and was packed with more than 1,000 people.

The format of the program consisted of a panel of more than 50 of the summit participants, a dozen of whom gave presentations. The speeches focused mainly on crime and violence and economic development. A question and answer period followed.



Militant/Sam Manuel

NAACP executive director Benjamin Chavis (at podium) addressing press during meeting. At far left is Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

About 25 people lined up at the microphones to ask questions or make comments. Some grew impatient at the amount of time taken by the panelists and the moderator and yelled out, "Let us speak, give us a chance to speak!"

Jesse Jackson commented on the "Three strikes you're out" criminal sentencing that's being pushed by the Clinton administration and passed in a number of states. Jackson expressed disagreement with this perspective countering it demagogically with his "four balls and you're on," with ball four representing a job. Jackson however, made no proposals on how to implement a jobs program.

Attacks on ANC

Historian John Henrik Clarke made extensive remarks on the African slave trade saying Africans replaced the white slave master with a "pseudo-white" (Arab) slavemaster who "still has his foot on their necks." Clarke also attacked the elections in South Africa as "fake," stating that Blacks won't be free until the "blood of the enemy" (whites) is spilled. South African president Nelson Mandela is not controlling anything, he "doesn't even control his own chauffeur," he said to rousing applause.

None of the conference participants attempted to answer this attack on the democratic revolution in South Africa. No panelist defended Mandela either. The South Af-

rican president has inspired millions as the central leader of the ANC, which stood at the forefront of the movement that destroyed the apartheid system.

A young woman from the audience said, "I agree with Dr. Clarke, Black people in South Africa are not free just like Black people here are not free. For those Black politicians who say they can't fight for us because the white politicians are kicking their butts, we need to be kicking their butts. What are we going to do about them?" she asked.

"Those brothers are under constraints we never see," Farrakhan replied. "We should never be under the illusion that this is going to solve the problems of our people. It's going to take all of us working together," he said to rousing applause.

Rightist course

Lenora Fulani, who ran for president in 1992 as the candidate of the New Alliance Party, said, "Black people who want to abandon the Democratic Party can join me," but "there are some good Black Democrats that we can support."

Both Farrakhan and Fulani are politicians with a bourgeois program and increasing ties to rightist groups. Nation of Islam leaders, for example, often appear on platforms with members of the fascist group headed by Lyndon LaRouche. There is a convergence with LaRouche's anti-Semitic con-

sideracy theories of world domination by Jews, as well as opposition to abortion rights and gay rights. Nation of Islam thugs are known to carry out physical assaults on opponents. The group was directly involved in the assassination of revolutionary leader Malcolm X in February 1965.

Fulani's New Alliance Party recently joined forces with supporters of right-wing politician Ross Perot to form the national Patriot Party.

Fulani's course runs parallel to Farrakhan's, which represents the growing political polarization among African-Americans, especially those who belong to the middle class.

One questioner who said that abortion is "genocide and population control" asked Farrakhan his opinion. Farrakhan replied "the womb is a sacred place. The violence of our children is the fruit of a tree and the roots of that tree can be traced back to Roe versus Wade [the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion]."

No response to this serious attack on women's rights was made from any of the other summit leaders — women or men. In fact, a number of other reactionary positions were stated including opposition to immigrants owning businesses in Black communities without any attempt to answer them politically.

Chavis commented on this issue by saying that the Black community needs economic development and should support Black businesses. Jesse Jackson said, "What good does it do to boycott an Arab store and then go down the street to Safeway?"

At the end of the conference, participants pledged to reconvene during the third week in August in Baltimore and broaden its participation. Local meetings were also encouraged to build for the next national gathering.

Chavis, spokesperson for the summit, said that three working committees were formed that would focus on economic development, youth and community empowerment, and moral and spiritual renewal. Chavis also said that greater accountability is needed from the government on the local, state, and federal levels, and that there "will be meetings to further identify where to apply the heat."

Farrakhan was the only participant who laid out any concrete plans for action. He received one of the largest ovations at the town meeting when he announced his plans to lead 1 million Black men in a march on Washington next year. Farrakhan is scheduled to return to Baltimore June 27 for a men-only rally as part of a national "Let Us Make Man" tour.

O.J. Simpson ordeal: latest front in cultural war

BY GREG ROSENBERG

Allegations that former football player and television personality O.J. Simpson murdered his ex-wife and an acquaintance of hers are shaping up to be a new battle-

NEWS ANALYSIS

ground in the cultural war. The big-business media has seized on the events leading up to Simpson's June 17 arrest to present a

lurid, pornographic tale, splashed across television screens and newspaper columns from coast to coast.

Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman were knifed to death outside Brown Simpson's Brentwood, California, condominium the night of June 12. Police rapidly announced O.J. Simpson was the suspect in the murder. Five days later, following a nationally televised highway pursuit, cops arrested Simpson. Arraigned on two counts of first degree murder June 20, Simpson pleaded not guilty. As of that date, prosecutors had released no evidence in the case.

While the capitalist media has presented endless salacious details purporting to represent the story, right-wingers have begun to use the Simpson case to bolster demands for law and order, and reinforce calls for "responsibility" amidst a decaying society. A thread running through much of the coverage is that the murder was committed against a "blonde-haired beauty" by her former husband, who is Black. This will be used by those advancing time-tested rightist nostrums about the roots of social crises, which often play on sexual and racial stereotypes.

The Simpsons divorced in 1992. Three years earlier, the police had arrested O.J. Simpson for beating up his wife. He pleaded no contest to the charge, paid a \$970 fine, and took counseling.

O.J. Simpson took a plane to Chicago approximately one hour after Brown Simpson and Goldman were murdered, and flew

back the next morning. Police took Simpson into questioning for several hours. His lawyer at the time, Howard Weitzman, said Simpson was at home during the killings. Simpson later replaced Weitzman with Robert Shapiro.

According to police, blood tested at the murder site is the same type as O.J. Simpson's.

On June 17, Simpson left what appeared to be a suicide note in the hands of his lawyer and drove off in a car with colleague Al Cowlings before police arrived to arrest him.

Police trailed Simpson for nearly two hours on a southern California freeway. A total of seven television news helicopters filmed the low-speed chase. This contributed to the carnival atmosphere, with some people hopping out of their cars to watch, and a few shouting "Go Juice." The three major television networks, Fox news affiliates, Cable News Network, and ESPN, all carried varying amounts of live coverage. At one point, the national basketball championships were interrupted for footage of the cops behind the van. TV announcer Larry King warned that Simpson was in the back seat, holding a gun to his head. Simpson surrendered at his Brentwood home.

Media presumes Simpson guilty

The capitalist media went into overdrive on what more than one commentator termed "an American tragedy." From the *Los Angeles Times* to the New York tabloids, Simpson was presumed guilty.

A June 19 *Washington Post* article captured the general spirit. "O.J. Simpson, Nicole Simpson and Ronald Goldman — the wealthy superstar, the former trophy wife, the young waiter aspiring to be a successful entrepreneur — were all recognizable characters in a seductive setting of sunny coffee shops, elaborate gyms and secluded luxury homes and apartments," the article states. "At 25, Goldman was 10 years younger than Nicole Simpson, who was divorced from O.J. in 1992. While intrigued by her beauty and her fame, co-workers and friends say he never intimated that he was dating her."

Many publications prominently displayed photos of Simpson with other women. Virtually no columnist failed to mention the color of Nicole Brown Simpson's hair. Referring to Nicole Simpson and her sister, the *New York Post*'s Andrea Peyster wrote, "Their awesome blondeness and flawless faces set the sisters apart, even in this land of golden-haired beauties." Peyster continued, "Today, O.J. Simpson is to be arraigned on charges of killing the mother of two precious and blameless children, an act all the more dastardly for its utter selfishness."

New York Times columnist William Safire, in a cautious June 20 piece, asked, "If innocent, why couldn't he 'go on?' Why run away from life, or from the police?" Safire said the suicidal note "strikes me as evidence of a flight from responsibility — Simpson's attempt to manipulate the emotions of

Continued on next page

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Housing struggle heats up in South Africa

Continued from front page
and eradicate discrimination at workplaces.

About 40 white commuter railway signal workers struck for three days in early June and shut down the trains, stranding 350,000 people in Witwatersrand.

Members of the right-wing Mineworkers Union, another whites-only job trust, struck at the Randfontein Estate Gold Mine in the West Rand. They demanded a return to the practice of hoisting white miners before Blacks at the end of the shift. Officials of the nonracial National Union of Mineworkers stated the now eradicated practice was "racial discrimination in the extreme," and said revoking the practice was unacceptable.

Members of the South Africa Clothing and Textile Workers' Union, in talks with the garment and textile bosses, are demanding higher wages and an end to employer bans on pregnancy leaves before two years seniority. Unionists want the time reduced to 12 months.

One of the most important victories achieved in the wake of the elections is a sharp drop in political violence throughout South Africa. The Human Rights Commission reported deaths fell from 487 in April to 195 in May. A majority of these were in KwaZulu-Natal province.

ANC efforts to blunt attacks by Mangosuthu Buthelezi's rightist Inkatha Freedom

Party, which holds a 51 percent majority in the regional parliament, have helped diminish killings. The accomplishment will help advance a real land reform, jobs program, and mass construction of housing. The violence, instigated by the old South African government and Inkatha, aimed to undercut the confidence and effective political activity of working people.

Another new development in KwaZulu-Natal is the growing divergence between Buthelezi and King Goodwill Zwelithini, a traditional Zulu leader. The king has openly broken with Buthelezi, holding meetings with Nelson Mandela and other ANC representatives.

Buthelezi and his henchmen have reacted forcefully. In a recent speech, the Inkatha chief said, "Everywhere I go I hear rumblings from Zulu people about the extent to which certain members of the royal family are actually succeeding in step by step, making the king beholden to the ANC."

Buthelezi boasted, "When I came to my maturity, there was in fact no real Zulu king." Zwelithini "has emerged as a modern king," the now Minister of Home Affairs for the national government stated. "I was personally behind all that."

ANC regional cabinet ministers are currently boycotting sittings of the KwaZulu-Natal legislature. They object to Inkatha's insistence that parliament be based in the small city of Ulundi, in the heart of Inkatha territory. ANC leaders favor Pietermaritzburg, the second largest city in the province.

Meanwhile, a federal cabinet panel said Zwelithini could remain trustee of 7.5 million acres of land granted to him prior to the elections, with some conditions limiting his control.

At the urging of defence force chief Gen. Georg Meiring, defense minister Joe Modise slapped a publishing interdict against the Johannesburg *Weekly Mail & Guardian*. The newspaper was to publish information on the secret police services under the old regime, including allegations of infiltration by apartheid spies into the ANC.

Modise, the former commander of the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, withdrew the publishing ban after strong protests, including from the ANC. A June 10 ANC statement called the order "regrettable," adding that the organization's policy "is unequivocally for full disclosure of past covert actions." It called on Modise to withdraw the order. Modise then ordered Meiring to repeat the affidavit.

The South African Parliament is to debate budget proposals made by Finance Minister Derek Keys in a June 22 speech. The budget includes allocation of funds to meet the measures advanced by Mandela to benefit the oppressed and exploited in South Africa, such as jobs, housing, land, food, water, and electricity.

Washington freezes account of group challenging U.S. travel ban to Cuba

BY JOE SWANSON

SAN FRANCISCO — The U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control notified the Freedom to Travel Campaign June 14 that the \$43,000 in its account at the Wells Fargo Bank was frozen. This money had been raised by 200 participants to pay for their expenses in the group's June 23-30 Travel Challenge tour to Cuba.

Washington's action, however, failed to intimidate a single individual among those going on the trip, which is organized in direct defiance of the U.S. travel ban to Cuba. In fact, a few more people signed up to go in the last few days, according to Medea Benjamin, coordinator and spokesperson for the Freedom to Travel Campaign. Among those sending support messages to the group were Congressional representatives Don Edwards, Ron Dellums, Lynn Woolsey, and Sam Farr, as well as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Benjamin spoke to reporters from the Bay Area's daily newspapers and TV and radio stations at a standing-room-only news conference in the federal building press room on the day of the travel challengers' departure. Benjamin said her organization refuses to buckle under government pressure. Many people around the country, she added, are showing support for the travel challenge by sending donations of \$25 to \$100.

According to Benjamin, almost three-fourths of the \$43,000 that was blocked had already been replaced by cash donations or pledges. "It's outrageous that just weeks after the United States renewed most favored nation status with China and opened diplomatic offices in Vietnam, our government is still trying to prevent us from traveling to Cuba," she said.

"It's time to put an end to the last vestige of the cold war and be friends of the Cuban people," said Terrence Hallinan, of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. "I have been a longtime supporter of the right to travel abroad and strongly endorse the travel challenge."

Mark Van der Hout, legal counsel of the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee (NECLC), also spoke at the press conference. He said that the NECLC will be filing a lawsuit in northern California federal district court to challenge the current travel restrictions and demand the government release the blocked funds.

Others speaking at the news event were author Jessica Mitford and Jose Cuellar, leader of the popular Bay Area musical group "Dr. Loco's Rockin' Jalapenos Band." The band, which is participating in the Freedom to Travel trip, will perform in a joint US-Cuba friendship concert during their stay in Cuba.

Cuellar explained that during the 1961 U.S. Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, "I was in the U.S. military mop-up campaign. We owe it to the Cuban people to drop all bans, including the culture one."

William Martinez, one of the leaders of the Freedom to Travel Campaign, is the initiator of the lawsuit against the U.S. Justice Department for its refusal to grant visas to some members of the Cuban musical group Mezcla, which toured San Francisco and other U.S. cities last winter. He will be traveling to Cuba along with members of Dr. Loco's band to participate as a musician.

The Treasury Department communication states that it "has reason to believe that the funds in accounts held by 'Freedom to Travel'"

at [a] branch of Wells Fargo Bank are for payment of travel expenses to and within Cuba in violation of [government] regulations and constitute funds in which Cuba and/or Cuban nationals have an interest."

The letter then instructs the Wells Fargo Bank to continue allowing deposits into blocked accounts but to prohibit withdrawals or debits unless specifically authorized.

The government cited sections of the 1917 Trading with the Enemy Act and the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act as justification for its actions. Under the trade embargo against Cuba, only certain groups of U.S. residents, such as journalists, academics, and Cuban-Americans on family visits, may spend money in Cuba without prior approval.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) issued a statement condemning the seizure of the bank account. Kate Martin, director of the ACLU's Center for National Security Studies, said that the seizure constituted an illegal attempt to prevent the group from exercising its constitutional right to travel to Cuba and educate its members about conditions there.

Washington flounders on N. Korea sanctions

Continued from front page

Japanese official said. He was referring to the U.S. demand that Tokyo bar Koreans living in Japan from sending money to relatives and friends in North Korea.

South Korea's prime minister Lee Young Dug declared a crackdown on the thousands of student demonstrators opposed to Washington's war moves. But resistance among working people to a blockade of North Korea and the understanding that a war against Pyongyang would destroy the peninsula leaves the regime in Seoul reluctant to support sanctions. "South Korea will not go along with sanctions or an attack on any nuclear plants with a summit meeting [with the North] on the horizon," said Michael Breen, editor of a monthly bulletin on North Korea.

The governments of the North and South agreed June 18 to a summit. South Korean government officials requested a June 28 conference with Pyongyang to discuss the meeting.

Weeks earlier, the South Korean defense minister talked openly in Parliament about

Plan 5027, under which U.S. and South Korean troops would respond to an attack by charging through to Pyongyang. Seoul staged a civil-defense drill in the city center June 15, but scaled it back from original plans.

Clinton administration officials met June 20 at the White House with former diplomats under presidents George Bush and Ronald Reagan, as well as academics and recent visitors to North Korea, to discuss how to proceed. "It's basically all the guys who have been trashing us in the op-ed pieces," an official said of the participants.

Statements by former U.S. president Jimmy Carter during his June 16-18 visit to North Korea angered the Clinton administration. Carter told Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) president Kim Il Sung that Washington had "stopped the sanction activity in the United Nations," where U.S. representatives have been circulating a draft resolution.

"The position is just exactly what it was yesterday. We are pursuing our sanctions discussion in the UN," President Bill Clinton said in response to Carter's declaration. "We have to go to sanctions if the violations continue."

Carter expressed his support for U.S. diplomatic recognition of Pyongyang and called threats of UN sanctions against the DPRK "counter-productive."

Kim Il Sung proposed huge cuts in North and South Korea's armies and agreed to Carter's request to help account for the remains of some 3,000 U.S. soldiers from the Korean War. U.S. officials avoided comment on these proposals.

Carter briefed the White House on agreements reached in Pyongyang. The DPRK government pledged to freeze its nuclear program in exchange for another round of high-level talks with Washington and help in replacing graphite-moderated reactors with light-water ones, to curb production of the byproduct plutonium.

"We think we should explore this," U.S. national security adviser Anthony Lake told Cable News Network. "In the meantime, we will continue with the [UN] Security Council on

our consultations for a sanctions resolution."

The DPRK government also requested a guarantee from Washington that it would not be subject to a nuclear attack from the United States or other countries.

The Pentagon has flaunted its reinforcement of U.S. military hardware and troops in South Korea — Patriot missiles, laser guided bombs, intelligence aircraft, and radar.

"The war drums are beating ever louder in our capital city," right-wing columnist



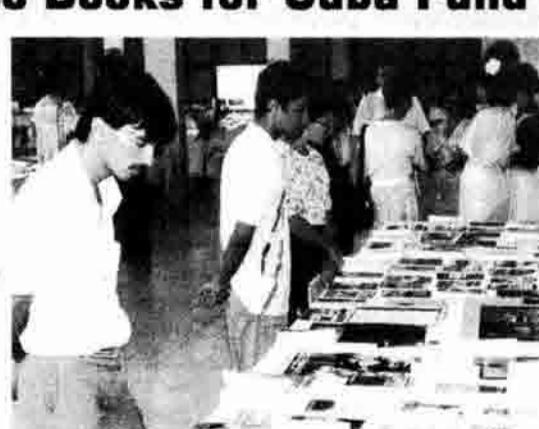
Patrick Buchanan wrote. He preached against the air strikes recommended by George Bush's national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft.

Buchanan said such measures would be ineffective against "the greatest tunnelers on earth." Instead he called for a nuclear and conventional arms buildup in South Korea and Japan.

Government officials in Japan are discussing whether to launch a no-confidence vote against Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata's minority coalition after Hata admitted that Tokyo has the capacity to make nuclear weapons. Other mouthpieces for the Japanese government later said this was an error. Tokyo faces enormous opposition from workers and farmers in Japan against its nuclear buildup and militarization drive.

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Koreans in Japan: a history of slavery

BY PAT SMITH

As Washington continues its war threats and slander campaign against North Korea, the 700,000 Korean residents living in Japan are having an impact on how Tokyo approaches this issue.

The Japanese government has been hesitant to cut off financial transfers with North Korea as part of U.S.-sought sanctions. Japanese officials, who have been under pressure from Washington to curb the flow of funds to North Korea, fear protests by the Korean residents in Japan.

Most Koreans living in Japan were brought there as slave labor following Japan's annexation of the Korean peninsula in 1910 or are the descendants of those forced laborers. They face discrimination and denial of basic rights.

Korean residents send millions of dollars to family members in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea every year. While some Japanese banks have voluntarily stopped transferring dollars to North Korea, government officials have so far been reluctant to endorse this policy. Tokyo fears that such restrictions could incite explosive protests by the 250,000 members of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, known as Chosensoren.

The majority of Koreans living in Japan originally hailed from the southern part of Korea, but for the most part, have not been supporters of the regime in Seoul. The main organizations of Koreans in Japan openly support reunification of Korea and identify with North Korea, reflecting the historic struggle by Korean workers and peasants against Japanese colonial oppression.

Massive protests by working people in Japan and South Korea forced Japanese justice minister Shigeto Nagano to resign in May after he made statements denying the 1937 massacre of more than 150,000 people by Japanese troops in Nanking, China. Tokyo also recently apologized for kidnapping tens of thousands of Korean women who were forced to accompany the Japanese army as prostitutes during World War II. They are officially known as "comfort women."

The large Korean community is not alone in its opposition to Tokyo's threats against North Korea. The Association for Asian Citizens, the Women's Democratic Club, and other groups held a march and gathering April 13 in Japan's capital city to oppose the government's drive to expand its use of troops abroad. Tokyo is seeking to amend its Self-Defense Forces law to once again allow troop deployment to places like Korea.

Compulsory identity cards

Protests finally forced the government in 1992 to end its policy requiring mandatory fingerprinting of all Koreans living in Japan. The measure, which was replaced with compulsory identity cards bearing photographs, extended to second and third generation Korean residents.

In April, the chairman of Japan's National Public Safety Commission announced plans for "an internal security manual" in case sanctions are imposed on North Korea. Meanwhile, Tokyo has stepped up its attacks against organizations that defend the rights of Korean residents. Hundreds of Japanese police raided the Kyoto regional headquarters of Chosensoren in June. They carted away stacks of documents and stormed dozens of related sites, including the homes and offices of some of the group's members. This was the second police attack on the association in recent months. More than 1,300 cops rushed the organization's Osaka offices in April.

The pretext for the Kyoto raid was that Chosensoren had not filed the proper permits to expand a school. Officials later admitted the permits had in fact been granted several years ago. Protests organized by Korean residents forced the cops to apologize.

"Far from repenting for its past colonial rule in Korea, the Japanese government is now strengthening racial oppression of Korean residents in Japan," a Chosensoren statement said. The organization said the raids were the largest in the group's 39-year history.

Japan's discriminatory policies have driven Koreans, along with a growing number

of immigrant workers from other parts of Asia, into inferior living and working conditions. Japanese law prevents Koreans from holding government jobs, including teaching jobs. Employers in the better-paying large industrial plants discriminate against Koreans as well.

The vast majority of Koreans are either engaged in small businesses, such as restaurants, or they work for small firms — often Korean-owned — at the bottom of Japan's multilayered subcontract system. Here they work long hours under poor conditions for a fraction of the wages paid in the big industries. The major trade unions in large industries have not defended the rights of Korean workers.

Korean schools in Japan are not accredited, a requirement for participation in sports and attending the best universities. Attacks on Korean schoolchildren, who are identified by their traditional dress, are not uncommon.

A disproportionately high number of the victims of the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were Korean laborers. Although the number of Korean casualties was remarkably high, no public funerals or memorial ceremonies were held as they were for Japanese victims.

Korean survivors of the blast have had to fight for decades for medical care from the Japanese government. The U.S. government, which dropped the two nuclear bombs, has not given them a dime either.

Japan recorded slightly under half a billion dollars in trade with North Korea last year. Fishing concerns in Sakaiminato, Japan, for example, spent \$12 million on seafood from North Korea at a tenth the rate they would pay for an equivalent Japanese catch. Japanese officials refuse to allow the crews of North Korean fishing fleets to leave their ships and enter the city.

Japanese domination

Korea increasingly came under Japanese domination at the beginning of this century and was formally annexed in 1910. It remained a colony until Japanese military forces surrendered during World War II.



Korean resident in Niigata, Japan, waves to ship passengers leaving for visit to N. Korea.

Japanese occupation forces suppressed the Korean language and traditional religion. A significant independence movement developed in Korea during the decades of colonial rule. On March 1, 1919, 2 million people rallied to end Japanese domination. This was followed by many other mass protests and the organization of an armed guerrilla struggle.

Japan's 1945 surrender sparked massive social upheavals throughout Korea. A wave of union organizing swept through factories; organizations of peasants, youth, and women mushroomed; and People's Committees united anticolonial forces.

The Korean People's Republic was established in Seoul, with close links to the mass organizations. The new regime called for an eight-hour workday; nationalization of mines, factories and railways; radical land reform; and other progressive measures.

Two days after the republic was formed, however, Washington occupied Korea south of the 38th parallel and Joseph Stalin in Moscow agreed to accept Japan's surrender in the north. The U.S. government prevented the establishment of a sovereign Korea and waged a campaign to crush the resistance of workers and peasants there. They set up a puppet regime, using much

of the Japanese colonial apparatus, including Korean officers who had served in the Japanese military.

By the end of the second world war some 2.1 million Koreans — 10 percent of Korea's population — had been taken to Japan. Some 700,000 were forced to work in the mines, 360,000 were conscripted into the Japanese army, and 170,000 women were forced into prostitution.

Two-thirds of these Koreans returned home in 1945. But the division of the Korean peninsula, after the stalemate in the Korean war in 1953, soon stopped this process.

Japanese law does not grant citizenship by birth, so second and third generation Koreans remain in a vulnerable situation.

In 1952, after U.S. occupation troops left Japan, Koreans were required to register as "aliens" and to carry a pass containing their fingerprints. This was similar to the pass laws imposed by the former apartheid regime of South Africa. Koreans can become Japanese citizens, but only if they accept stiff conditions. They must adopt a Japanese name and abandon their Korean citizenship. Their papers are still marked to indicate their Korean origin, which allows employers to continue to discriminate against them.

Paper workers in Sweden defend free speech

BY INGE HINNEMO

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Through a five-hour-long "wild cat" strike at two paper mills, and threats of a walkout at a third one, workers forced the company, Södra Skogsägama, to reinstate process operator Kjell-Erik Karlsson at the Väro Bruk mill. Karlsson was fired in August 1993. For 10 months the employer refused to give in despite protests from the Swedish paper workers union, a verdict by the Labor Court ordering Karlsson reinstated, and editorials in the major dailies urging the company to back down. Representatives of the government and the social democratic opposition had also called on the company to rehire the worker.

Karlsson is the local chairman of Vänsterpartiet (Left Party) in Varberg in southern Sweden. He represents this party in the city council. Karlsson has publicly spoken out against destruction of the environment as a result of production in the mill and has defended the conditions and safety of workers inside the plant. Södra Skogsägama officials accused him of "disloyalty." But working people saw the firing as a serious attack on free speech and constitutional rights.

"Sure we risk our jobs and sure we risk large damages. But the question is if we don't risk a lot more if we don't do something now we'll lose our rights," striking electrician Olle Apelqvist told the Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter*.

The strikes took place June 10. The Labor Court had issued its verdict ordering the company to reinstate Karlsson two days earlier. On June 9, the company refused to give Karlsson access to the plant. Management said he was still fired and that he would be paid 32 months wages in damages as the law prescribes. The minister of labor in the ruling coalition government, Börje Höglund, urged the company to reconsider its decision. Ingela

Thale'n, a leader of the social democratic opposition, took up a demand promoted by the union officialdom to raise the damages that companies have to pay if they do not heed the verdicts of the Labor Court.

But capitalist politicians and the editors of the big bourgeois dailies are not concerned about the constitutional rights of working people. What worries them is that this flagrant attack on free speech could lead to a critical debate on labor legislation and on the right of employers to freely get rid of workers, by paying some damages, which are quite affordable to the big companies.

The relevant law — introduced by a social democratic government in 1974 — states explicitly, "If an employer refuses to heed a verdict whereby a court has nullified a firing, the employment should be regarded as ended."

Employers have used this avenue several times to fire workers they think could cause them trouble or to buy them out before the case even reached court. In spite of demands by dismissed workers and local unions, the top union leaderships and the Social Democratic Party have refused to change this law.

The Labor Court is composed of representatives of the employers and the central union officialdom. Its verdict in the Karlsson case reflects the worries of the capitalist class.

"A victory for freedom of speech?" an editorial in the daily *Svenska Dagbladet* asked rhetorically. "No," the paper assured. The verdict stated that "the publicizing by Kjell-Erik Karlsson of information internal to the company has not been grave enough to give reason to end the employment," the editorial said. "The constitution guarantees our right to speak our opinions, but it does not protect us from the reactions to what we say."

But it was the workers' readiness to fight and their solidarity with a fired fellow unionist that made this victory for free speech possible. The strike showed that nei-

ther economic depression nor attacks on the rights of working people have diminished the power of workers to stop production and hurt capitalists where it counts — their profits. This is especially true for the Swedish paper industry, which is competing for a share in the world's export markets during the current economic upturn."

"The situation became untenable," said company executive Bo Hedström. "Just now we need to produce as much pulp as we ever could." A strike at the three mills would have meant a daily loss to the company of 10 to 20 million Swedish kronors. [1Kr=U.S.\$13]

IN SWEDISH *Ny International* no. 1

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Nationwide strike shuts Caterpillar plants

Continued from front page

mere 40 minutes despite the willingness of union negotiators to narrow their demands to initially settling 14 complaints, including bringing back 11 of the more than 35 illegally fired workers.

The meeting was the first and only one held by the two sides since the company imposed its final offer in 1992, when union officials ended a 163-day strike without having negotiated a new contract. Management had threatened to hire scabs.

The failed negotiations and current strike follow a lockout by the company at its Aurora, Illinois, plant. Workers there struck on June 7 to demand the return of three UAW members fired for displaying union slogans on their lunch boxes.

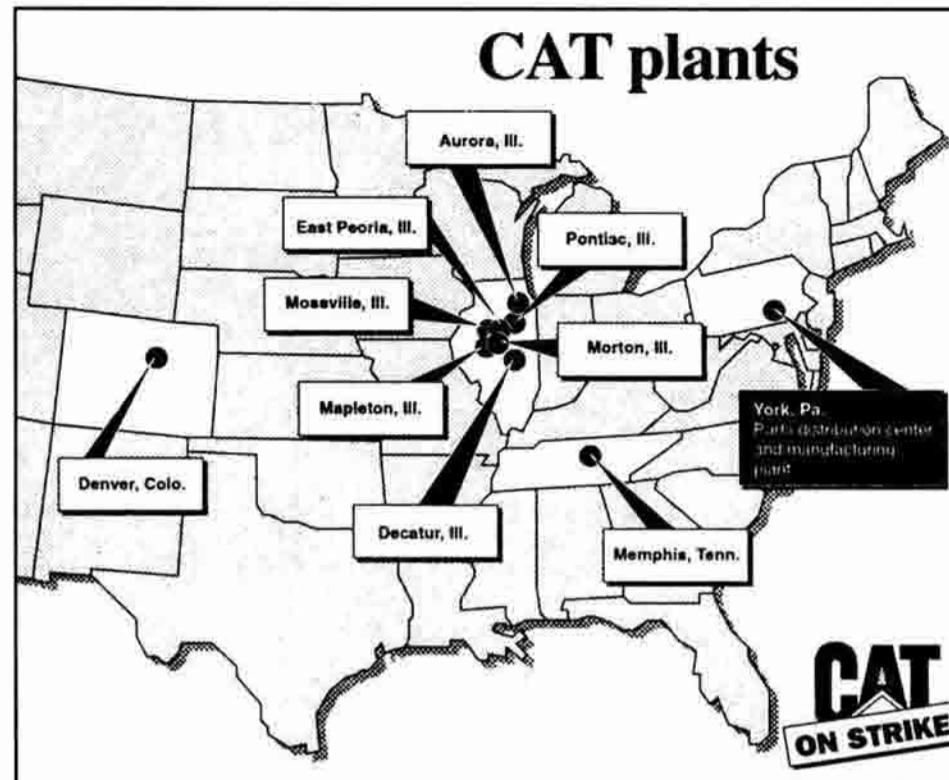
When union officials ordered workers back to work, the company locked them out demanding a no-strike pledge. UAW members stood firm. The company backed down and the lockout was lifted June 17.

As the strike began June 21, Caterpillar's stock fell \$4.25, or 4 percent, to \$102.13.

Caterpillar announced that it will begin hiring to keep production going and claims that more than 26 percent of all first-shift workers here crossed picket lines, a claim vigorously challenged by strikers and union officials alike.

Fewer than 3 percent of the workforce reported for work after the strike was called, union officials said. A survey of plant gates here confirmed union estimates. Few cars entered the two gates designated by the company to herd strikebreakers.

Workers in the Mapleton Caterpillar foundry were the first to walk off the job at about 9:00 p.m. on June 20, almost 24 hours prior to a strike deadline set by the UAW's na-



Workers have shut down all but Morton and Memphis Caterpillar plants.

tional bargaining council. Supervisors' attempts to stifle shop floor discussions about the breakdown of negotiations prompted workers to act sooner, strikers said.

By next morning, workers at the Mossville engine plant and at Caterpillar's complex here joined the strike. Pontiac and Decatur plants were struck by that afternoon. The entire system was shut down by 10:00 p.m. June 21.

Within an hour after the company broke off negotiations, Caterpillar fired the open-

ing shots of what has become a fierce public relations war. Company-sponsored commercials appeared on television blaming the union for the impending strike.

Company vice-president Wayne Zimmerman claimed the UAW was trying to win back the jobs of a small group of workers who were "thieves," had destroyed company property, and had "threatened to kill company officials." Other commercials call on workers to cross picket lines.

"We never stole, threatened company officials, or did anything they claim," said Mike Shockency, one of the illegally discharged UAW members. He said he was clearly fired for his activities promoting the union among coworkers.

"If we don't have a union, we don't have anything," Shockency said. "The company treats the workers like terrorists" for standing up for the union.

Caterpillar has discharged or suspended many union members for wearing union T-shirts and buttons on the job, for discussing union issues with coworkers, and for chanting union slogans. In March 1993, for example, 75 workers were suspended in Aurora, Illinois, for wearing buttons that said "UAW member in good standing." Last May, 37 workers in Mossville, Illinois, were fired for having balloons with union insignia on them, which the company deemed offensive to management. A four-day strike won the reinstatement of 34 of the dismissed workers.

UAW Local 974 president Jerry Brown blasted the company's attempts to criminalize

fellow union members as "absolute lies."

In press interviews, Brown has appealed to the small layer of union members that have crossed the line to stick with the union. "The only chance workers are ever going to have is by standing together, shoulder to shoulder," he said. "It's the only way we have survived and, sometimes, we can make gains."

Spouses of UAW members are active in supporting the strike and many are showing up at some picket lines. "I'm behind my husband 100 percent. He's not going to cross," Debbie Shallenberger told Peoria's WMBD radio as she walked the picket line. "We're in this for the full nine yards, even if we have to sell the house" to outlast the company. Shallenberger urged other spouses to join strike support activities.

The walkout has stirred discussion and polarized debate throughout central Illinois. Many workers support the UAW strike. "They deserve a pat on the back for the stand they've taken," a phone company worker said.

Discussing the strike with customers in her checkout line, a grocery store cashier said she hoped UAW members would "stay out, do it right this time, and get a contract."

Others consider the union and company equal evils and find the ongoing struggle annoying. One element in Caterpillar's strategy is to exploit divisions between older and younger workers.

According to the Peoria *Journal Star*, the company is banking on the vulnerability of a workforce where the average hourly employee is 47 years old and has almost 23 years' seniority.

In hiring ads that have appeared throughout the region, Caterpillar has advertised wages of \$17 an hour for workers willing to cross picket lines.

"They have good paying jobs," a young truck driver said about the UAW strikers. "I would be happy to make what they make. I hope both sides kill each other."

Many pickets, however, explain that their struggle is not just about wages. "We're fighting to preserve what we have won for the next generation," one striker said.

Confidence among strikers is high. They know the current economic upturn has brought the demand for Caterpillar equipment to new highs and profits are reaching historic levels.

"If we can stay as strong as we are now, we'll win this strike sooner rather than later," one picket said.

For more information on the strike or to get speakers before your union or other organization, call Bob Dunn at UAW Local 974 in East Peoria, Illinois, at (309) 694-3151.

Peter Thierjung is a member of UAW Local 538 in Cleveland.

A chronology of Caterpillar fight

Below is a chronology of events since 1991 in the struggle by members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union to fend off Caterpillar Inc.'s drive to bust their union. From 1948 to 1993, workers were forced to resort to 10 chainwide strikes to win contracts with the company, including a 205-day strike in 1982. The 1991-92 strike lasted five and a half months.

1991

November 3 — Union calls limited strike in East Peoria and Decatur, Illinois, after negotiations fail to bring about an agreement.

November 7 — Caterpillar retaliates by locking out 3,450 workers in East Peoria, 50 in Peoria, and 2,150 in Aurora, Illinois.

1992

February 7 — Company ends lockouts. February 12 — Union escalates strike. Workers formerly locked out join strike.

February 19 — Caterpillar makes "final offer," which is rejected by UAW. The offer breaks from the pattern agreement negotiated by the union at John Deere Co. Proposal calls for two-tier wages at parts facilities, guts seniority protections and grievance procedures, and cuts health benefits.

March 22 — Strike gathers momentum as 15,000 supporters rally in Peoria. Other unions contribute to the UAW's strike fund. Strikers receive \$2,000 lump sum checks to supplement strike benefits.

April 1 — Company calls on workers to return to work under threat of being replaced by scabs. UAW expands strike to four more plants involving 1,820 workers.

April 14 — Union officials order workers back to work without a contract. Company imposes final offer while agreeing to continue negotiations with the union.

June 2 — Talks between Caterpillar, UAW, and federal mediators break down.

December 1 — Company extends duration of final offer until 1997.

1993

April — UAW members and leaders are disciplined and arrested on company property for wearing union T-shirts and buttons. Charges later dropped after a campaign by the union.

September 9-10 — Company suspends two UAW union representatives at Pontiac, Illinois, plant. Some 700 workers respond with first unfair labor practice strike and

2,000 Aurora workers join walkout.

October 20-22 — Thirty-two workers walk off the job in Denver after management suspends UAW local president Joe Vasquez for wearing button critical of the company.

November 11-14 — Company suspends Mossville, Illinois, union official George Boze, provoking a chainwide strike of 14,000 that takes the company by surprise.

1994

March 7 — Workers strike in Pontiac after company fires worker. Company backs down and strike is ended.

April 20 — Caterpillar announces best quarterly sales and profits in company history. Yet stock prices drop, as investors worry about increasing labor unrest at the company.

April 26 — Company provokes unfair labor practice strike in Decatur by stripping a shop steward of his right to represent UAW Local 751 members. Aurora workers join walkout.

May 7 — More than 12,000 UAW members and other unionists rally in Peoria to back Caterpillar workers. An international gathering of unionists affiliated to the International Metalworkers Federation pledge their support.

May 10-11 — Pontiac workers strike.

May 12-14 — Workers in York, Pennsylvania, strike to protest unrelenting harassment of union steward George Erbe by supervisors. The plant is emptied just 15 minutes after Erbe is rushed to hospital with chest pains stemming from harassment.

May 16-19 — Company "permanently suspends" 37 workers for having balloons with union insignia. A four-day strike wins the return of 34 UAW members. Remaining three later reinstated.

June 7-16 — The suspension of three UAW members for having slogans critical of the company on their lunch boxes provokes a strike in Aurora. Union officials call workers back to work June 14 but company locks them out. The lock out is lifted June 16.

June 17 — The UAW Central Bargaining Council calls for negotiations with Caterpillar to settle unresolved unfair labor practices and sets June 21 strike deadline.

June 20 — UAW and company negotiators meet in Indianapolis, Indiana, for 40 minutes. Company walks out. Mapleton, Illinois, foundry workers walk off job at 9:00 p.m.

June 21 — The rest of chain is shut down by 10:00 p.m. deadline and new chapter in the struggle opens up.



PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

ERIC SIMPSON

Pathfinder, located in New York with distributors in Australia, Britain, and Canada, publishes the writings and speeches of working-class and communist leaders who have contributed to the forward march of humanity in the struggle against exploitation and oppression. Pathfinder bookstores are listed in the directory on page 16.

Supporters of Pathfinder have begun to take advantage of the new edition of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, using it as the basis for roundtable classes on politics today.

Brooklyn Pathfinder bookstore volunteer Ellie Garcia had the book with her as she helped defend a local women's health clinic from a threatened rightist mobilization. The attack failed to materialize. As the clinic defenders discussed politics, one young woman, on the line for the first time, decided to buy Garcia's copy.

A member of the United Transportation Union from Newark lent a copy of *The Changing Face* to a fellow rail worker. After reading half the book, he decided to buy it.

In Miami, a group of Pathfinder readers is nearing the end of a series of discussions on the book. In Birmingham supporters of Pathfinder are starting an eight-week discussion group. The Manhattan Pathfinder bookstore is hosting a similar class series.

The current issue of *Selamta*, the inflight magazine of Ethiopian Airlines, features *February 1965: The Final Speeches* by Malcolm X in the Bookshelf section. "During the three weeks prior to his assassination on 21 February, 1965, Malcolm X spoke to audiences in Britain and France and across the U.S. . . . This is the first in a series of books which collects — in chronological order — Malcolm X's major speeches and writings," the review points out. Look for *Malcolm X Speeches: January 1965*, the next installment in the series, this winter.

From the Canary Islands came this note. "I write . . . to get some information about Malcolm X, so difficult to find in my land. I wrote to a Spanish publisher and they gave me your address . . . Thanks!"

A strike wave rolls across the United States

SWP National Committee assesses labor resistance, opportunities to build party

BY STEVE CLARK
AND NAOMI CRAINE

NEW YORK — The strike wave rolling across the United States — with the battle against Caterpillar at its heart — was at the center of discussions at a meeting of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party held here June 11-14. This upturn in labor resistance and union activity over the last several months is the most important political shift that communist workers are responding to and finding ways to participate in today, explained SWP national secretary Jack Barnes in a report to the meeting.

The meeting of the party's elected national leadership body was held to prepare the SWP national convention, which will take place August 3-7 in Oberlin, Ohio. SWP leaders from cities across the United States, including many active in the leadership of the party's trade union work, participated in the discussions, drawing on experiences from labor, farm, and political protest activities in their areas. Leaders of young socialist groups in the United States and communist leagues from several other countries also took part in the four days of discussions and decision making.

The current round of union fights, they concluded, creates new opportunities to strengthen the building of a communist party rooted in the industrial working class and its trade unions. It increases the openings to relaunch a nationwide socialist youth organization and involve workers in broader political activity.

Strike wave

SWP leader James Warren, a member of United Steelworkers (USWA) Local 7773 in Chicago, described the strike wave in a report to the National Committee meeting. Leaders of the party's involvement in various trade unions around the country prepared this report, working late into the evenings during the National Committee meeting.

Warren pointed to some of the fights that have taken place over the past few months or are unfolding today. The resistance, he said, has centered not on wage issues. Workers are fighting against further assaults on job and safety conditions, against union busting by the employers, and against efforts by the bosses to divide and weaken the solidarity of the workforce. Recent struggles pointed to by Warren include:

- The ongoing wave of strikes and resistance by UAW-organized workers at Caterpillar against the company's refusal to negotiate a contract and its victimization of union militants in the plants.

- The strike by 75,000 Teamsters in April that blocked efforts by the large trucking employers to impose a major expansion of part-time work with low wages and few benefits.

- The first national strike ever against United Parcel Service by Teamsters-organized workers in February, which turned back company efforts to increase the weight handled by UPS employees.

- The strike by flight attendants at American Airlines in November 1993, where the workers won the admiration of the nation, beat back company union busting plans, and emerged more confident in their own capacity to fight.

- Strikes by United Auto Workers members at General Motors parts plants in Ohio and Louisiana earlier this year that stopped some of the auto giant's plans to produce more cars with fewer workers and less inventory.

- The overwhelming rejection by UAW-organized workers at Navistar International, which produces trucks, of a proposed contract that would have imposed lower wages for new hires as a trade-off for lump-sum payments to retirees.

- The strike by some 1,800 members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union in five states against Leslie Fay, which has been proceeding with plant shutdowns and layoffs in direct violation of the union contract.

- The victory by members of the United Steelworkers of America at Allegheny Ludlum Steel in a 10-week-long strike against the company's brutal and arbitrary extension of the workweek and other issues.

The continuing vitality of the wave of strikes and the



UAW members on picket line outside Caterpillar plant in Aurora, Illinois, April 1992, during first strike in the two-year labor-management showdown.

broader political importance of this working-class resistance was confirmed over the week following the SWP National Committee meeting.

- More than 2,000 workers in the United Transportation Union shut down the Long Island Rail Road solid, scoring a victory against the bosses' demands for work-rule changes that would arbitrarily extend the workweek.

- Workers at several General Dynamics plants in three states walked out to defend medical benefits.

- More than 13,000 workers at eight Caterpillar plants in Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Colorado began a system-wide strike demanding immediate reinstatement of 14 fired workers and the resolution of almost 100 outstanding unfair-labor-practice complaints that have been filed against the company by the National Labor Relations Board.

Even prior to the most recent strikes, the level of union struggles so far this year is the highest in the last half decade. In 1993, strikes hit a record low for the 47 years that the U.S. government has kept records. By contrast, Warren reported to the SWP leadership meeting, the number of workers on strike tripled in the first four months of 1994 compared to the same period the previous year, and the number of workdays lost due to strike actions quadrupled.

Last year the number of workers who are in unions in the United States increased for the first time in 14 years, matching the overall increase in the size of the workforce. Thus the percentage of workers who are unionized — which had fallen every year since the early 1960s — remained the same, at 15.8 percent.

Warren described the shifting attitudes and spirits on the picket lines reported by socialist workers from throughout the United States.

Bosses push too hard

This increased labor resistance is taking place during an upswing in the capitalist business cycle. The cyclical recovery comes amid the deflationary pressures of an economic depression that opened in the early 1990s — the first world depression since the 1930s.

The political report by SWP leader Jack Barnes placed

the strike wave in the framework of the rapid evolution of U.S. and world capitalism and international politics since the stock market crash of 1987. Barnes referred extensively to an expanded text of the talk he gave to a socialist conference held in Chicago at the beginning of April, based on the political evaluation adopted by a January 1994 meeting of the National Committee. That talk, "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War," was discussed and adopted by the June National Committee and has been placed before the party membership for discussion and vote leading up to the August convention.

"Downsizing and cost-cutting have been the capitalists' watchwords in recent years," Barnes said, as they seek to reverse the decline in their profit rates and reconquer what they call "market share" from their rivals in Japan, Germany, and other industrialized countries. At the same time, under the banner of "labor flexibility," the bosses have been pushing for longer hours of more intense work by fewer workers.

The employers in the United States are ahead of their major competitors in pressing this antilabor offensive. Capitalists in the United States have gone farther and faster in extending the workweek, speeding up production, slashing wages and implementing multistep pay schedules, and undermining health coverage as well as safety standards on the job. The bosses' twin political parties, the Democrats and Republicans, and their government — from Washington to city hall — have squeezed workers' social wage (pensions, medical coverage, education, and other entitlements).

Since the latter half of 1993, Barnes pointed out, the most successful of the U.S. employers have not only been stepping up production but have now, belatedly, started hiring additional labor. With anticipated profit returns still very low on investments in large, capacity-increasing plant and equipment, the bosses have sought to squeeze as much as possible out of the workforce — new hires and more experienced workers alike — without such costly expansion. "The days of 'expand first, figure out how to use it profitably second,' are behind us," Barnes said.

The bosses began pushing beyond the bounds of what workers are willing to accept, however, he explained. The



Teamsters on strike against Pepsi-Cola, Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, June 21. Bottling plant workers walked out to protest wage freeze and cuts in health benefits. Unionists at Leslie Fay and General Dynamics are also walking picket lines at the same time outside nearby plants.

hours become too long, the workload too heavy, the injury rates too high, and — above all under such conditions — the verbal abuse and management harassment too degrading.

"The bosses start panicking in their efforts to increase returns," Barnes said. Similar to what happens in a panic in the stock and bond markets, "Fear begins overtaking greed as the dominant factor determining the employers' actions.

"The more fear drives them, the more volatile the capitalist system becomes," he said, "the more volatile the class struggle becomes. For years the bosses have been pushing the working class harder and harder, in a brutal but measured way that workers hate but often adjust to in one way or another.

"But over the past year the bosses began pressing in an almost panicky way. They waited too long into the post-1991 cyclical upturn to bring in new hires and step up production. Market share was there for the taking, but they couldn't produce enough to tap it."

The strike wave, Barnes pointed out, is a product of the upturn in hiring. The employers reckoned they could reap the fruits of the two-tier wage structure and other givebacks they have imposed on the working class and unions over the past decade, with the aim of dividing and weakening

the labor movement. They hoped the younger, lower-seniority new hires would resent the older, often better-paid workers and would stay shy of fights in the plants for fear of losing their jobs. The bosses banked on older, higher-seniority workers not wanting to rock the boat and putting a damper on any signs of rebelliousness by younger militants.

That's not how it worked out, however. "The employers began pushing too hard and too far," the SWP leader said, "and the working class began to respond — together. That's what we're seeing right now."

Depression conditions, hiring, resistance

During a period of relatively low unemployment, such as the long period of capitalist expansion that followed World War II, a wave of hiring hasn't necessarily led to a wave of strikes and labor resistance, Barnes pointed out. The working class is not under the same pressures and tensions when another job can usually be found pretty quickly, and when those who are laid off can collect relatively ample unemployment compensation, supplemental pay, and other benefits.

But in a depression, that shifts. "The struggles don't come simply from employment growing a little bit and new, younger workers coming into the labor movement. The struggles result from workers' attempts to defend themselves in face of more rapid and sharper alternations in the business cycle. Hopes and expectations rise during upswings and then rapidly prove to have been illusory during sharp drops," said Barnes. "Workers fight to defend themselves against the consequences on their living and working conditions of this grinding instability."

During downturns in a depression, he said, workers face the insecurity and instability of high and rising joblessness and assaults on their wages and conditions. Then, suddenly, there are a few more jobs. "New hires react and are willing to fight — not just because they are gaining confidence because times are good, but because they are being jerked around," Barnes explained. "They know they're shorttimers, that there's a good chance the jobs will only last a few months.

"This doesn't make these younger workers less aggressive and militant. It more often emboldens and angers them."

Barnes pointed to what had happened during the Great Depression of the 1930s. It was during the cyclical upswing in hiring in 1933-34 and again briefly in 1936-37, as joblessness dropped from nearly 25 percent to below 15 percent, that workers organized the most important labor battles that built the industrial unions.

During the upswing in hiring since the closing months of 1993, Barnes said, most young workers coming into industry for the first time no longer harbor the illusion they will have permanent jobs if they just go along with the bosses' demands. They are more ready to say "no."

What's more, the readiness to fight among these younger workers converges with changing attitudes among more experienced, older workers who also begin to resist what they had come to tolerate under the pressure of high unemployment during sharp downturns in the business cycle.

"Growing numbers of workers spanning several generations are deciding it's better for them and their co-workers to stand up on their feet and do something," said Barnes. "That's the character of the strike wave that's now under way. We have not used the term 'strike wave' in a long time, so it's good to be cautious and make sure we're basing our assessment on the facts."

"But this is a strike wave. It goes beyond incidental, occasional guerrilla actions and walkouts. It goes beyond just one industry or a particular geographical region."

Most of the strikes are not simply over economic demands. They are breaking out over the pace of work, the brutality of conditions under which workers sell their labor power, and the arrogance of the bosses' demands.

"The UPS strike provides some of the sharpest lessons," said Barnes. "The corporate heads thought they had the perfect deal. The UPS bosses evidently figured that since drivers make very good money, that's all they cared about. So management suddenly doubled the maximum weight drivers and warehouse workers were required to handle. The last thing the employers expected was that the majority of workers would say 'no,' but that's what happened. And the UPS bosses had to back off."

UPS, Caterpillar, Allegheny Ludlum

"This example tells us something about the human solidarity that resides in the working class," he said. "The bosses counted on the youngest and strongest workers to go along, but more than 12,000 of them refused."

Barnes stressed the example of workers at Caterpillar, whose ongoing resistance had placed them at the center of the strike wave even before the system-wide walkout June 21. "Caterpillar management decided to draw a line in the sand," Barnes said, "but workers just kept on stepping over it." After the United Auto Workers officialdom called off a five-month strike there in 1992, workers went back into the plants under the company's so-called final offer. But the union ranks had not been defeated, and the struggle slowly continued in altered forms.

"It is Caterpillar that has a growing problem," Barnes said. "They're beating their main world rival, Komatsu; they're moving all the heavy equipment they can build. But they can't produce the goods without hiring workers. So they're sort of stuck. They call back some people, and the more they do that the more aggressive, the more likely the workers are to take action."

The "just-in-time" inventories that Caterpillar and other companies are increasingly implementing as part of the downsizing and cost-cutting now leave them more vulnerable to any disruption as well.

Discussing some of the concrete examples of workers resistance, SWP National Committee member Roni McCann, a member of the United Steelworkers Local 9126 in Cleveland, described some of the imagination of the steelworkers who struck Allegheny Ludlum. She said members of USWA Local 1138 at the company's plant in Leechburg, Pennsylvania, relate with pleasure how some enterprising strikers organized to get a circus elephant and its trainers down to the gate June 2. The animal performed several tricks, including standing on its hind legs. "They said it had a big impact — no trucks tried to go through the gate that day," she said. And it made fun of the company in a way no one had thought of before.

Another time 40 motorcyclists paid a visit to the picket lines carrying a sign that read, "We support [USWA] Local 1138 and 1196."

"This is our 'cycle time'" commented one striker, referring to the company's euphemism for tying workers' schedules to the pace of orders for steel. This "disruption of work life," as the strikers termed the massive forced overtime, was a central issue in their strike.

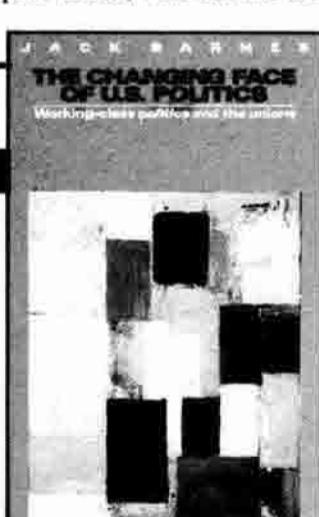
Opportunities to build communist movement

The current strike wave opens the possibility for communist workers in the Socialist Workers Party to revitalize the structures of a party rooted in the industrial working class and its most basic organizations, the trade unions, Barnes said in his report to the National Committee.

This is the kind of party that revolutionary-minded workers set out to build in the United States in the early 1920s, as they sought to emulate the example of the Bolsheviks who led the workers and peasants in the victorious October 1917 revolution in Russia. It is the course that continued to be carried out by the leaders and cadres of the Socialist Workers Party and its predecessors in the 1930s, as they advanced the struggle for a proletarian party. During those years, communist workers and youth in the United States participated in the labor battles that built the industrial unions and fought as part of a world movement to mobilize working-class opposition to the rise of fascism and the capitalists' march toward the slaughter of World War II.

This is the fourth opportunity to strengthen the SWP's proletarian institutions since the labor movement in the United States went into a prolonged retreat in the 1950s following the labor upsurge at the end of and immediately following World War II. In each case, Barnes said, the party would have put itself in danger of sliding off its historic proletarian orientation had it not acted decisively to turn toward these openings and embrace them.

The first opportunity came in the wake of the 1974-75 recession — the first worldwide capitalist downturn since 1937-38. That slump in the mid-1970s signaled the exhaustion of the economic factors that had fueled the long postwar capitalist expansion. Millions of workers, bit by bit, began to shed the illusion — slowing growth in the 1950s and increasingly common by the 1960s — that economic and social betterment, even if slow, was a permanent feature of the capitalist system. The impact of this change in consciousness among growing layers of working people — combined with the effects of the social protest movements for civil rights for Blacks, against the Vietnam War, and for women's rights — created better conditions than any time since the 1950s for the SWP to carry out political work on a broad scale as active members of the industrial unions.



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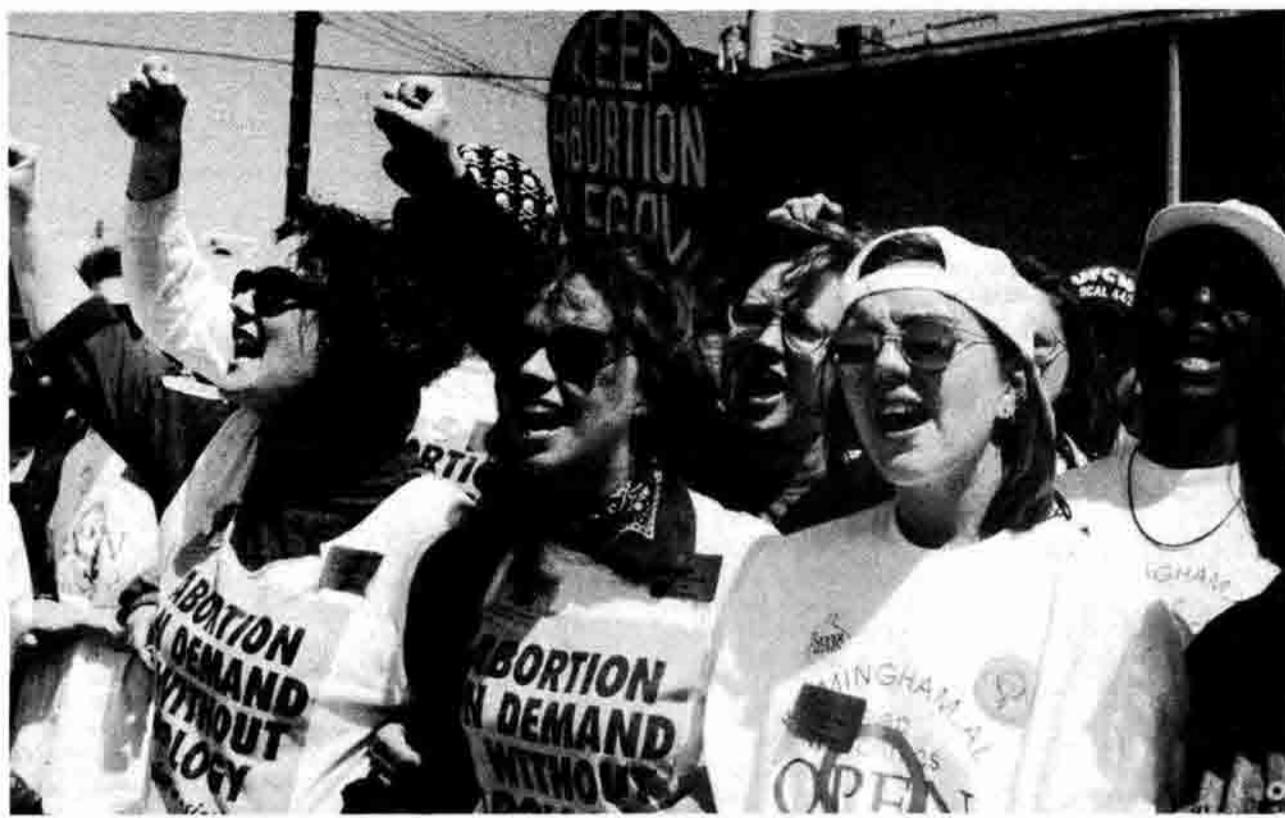
JACK BARNES

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Youthful crowd defends abortion clinic against Operation Rescue in Birmingham, Alabama, April 2, 1994. Radicalizing youth can look to working-class resistance as way forward out of the mire of capitalism.

The industrial working class was moving onto the center stage of politics in the United States and other industrialized capitalist countries. In 1978 the SWP National Committee responded to these growing opportunities by increasing party members' political work alongside coworkers and in the unions and organizing the overwhelming majority of party members to get jobs in industry. This turn to the industrial unions, said Barnes, "was as much about carrying out work in defense of the socialist revolution in Cuba and reaching out to fellow revolutionists there and elsewhere around the world; it was as much about winning youth to the communist movement, from whatever social origin; it was as much about how to go into battle most effectively alongside others to champion the demands of women, Blacks, and other oppressed nationalities; it was as much about campaigning against imperialism and war, as it was about the trade unions."

"Trade union work is also what you need if you want a good postgraduate education in how to carry out mass political work," the SWP leader explained. "Communist workers who have worked hard and done well at trade union work do the best in defending the Cuban revolution; they do the best in the fight for women's rights; they do the best in explaining the importance of the unfolding revolution in South Africa and joining with others in activities in solidarity with it."

Meatpacking battles in 1980s

The second opportunity for worker-bolsheviks to revitalize the party's industrial union fractions came in the mid-1980s, Barnes said, as the SWP took part in the wave of battles in the meatpacking industry in the Midwest. Beginning with the strike by workers at Hormel in Austin, Minnesota, in 1985-86, packinghouse workers fought back against brutal speedup and assaults on their wages and benefits. Members of the SWP established an Iowa district of the party, encompassing new branches in Austin; Des Moines, Iowa; and Omaha, Nebraska. Many of them got jobs in meatpacking plants organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

The party's union fractions were revitalized a third time at the end of the 1980s and opening of the 1990s. Socialist workers were among the rank-and-file leaders who emerged in the course of the 686-day strike that blocked Eastern Airlines' union-busting drive from becoming the road to a profitable nonunion company. While the Eastern strike was under way, UMWA-organized coal miners waged a hard-fought strike against the Pittston Coal Co., and workers and youth in the SWP joined with unionists and others around the country to build solidarity with these intertwined labor fights.

In late 1990 and early 1991, Washington prepared and then launched its murderous assault on the people of Iraq. Communists used the political space open to them in the industrial unions to carry out a working-class campaign against the imperialist war.

The strike wave and youth

These experiences and the conclusions communist workers have drawn from them are detailed in the new edition of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, recently published by Pathfinder Press. Another chapter is now being written as SWP members participate in the unfolding strike wave, join the new generation of workers moving and changing jobs as hiring in industry increases, and renew the institutions of a party of communist workers in the process.

The strike wave, and the deepening involvement of communist workers in it, increases the opportunities to attract young people to the working class, rebuild a nation-

wide socialist youth organization, and strengthen the political work of the communist movement.

As the disorder of the world capitalist system has unfolded since the October 1987 stock market crash, accelerated by the Gulf War in early 1991, growing numbers of young people are being repelled by the grim future capitalism has to offer humanity. It is a future marked by the growth of ultrarightist and fascist movements, imperialist military aggression to defend capitalist interests around the world, sharpening conflicts between Washington and its imperialist rivals, and consequent mounting pressures toward a third world war.

More young people are looking for radical answers today. Many seek out social protests to join in — from defending abortion rights to organizing counterdemonstrations against the Ku Klux Klan to opposing the U.S. embargo against Cuba. Some begin to read and study socialist politics, and start looking for a socialist organization to join.

Since early 1994, groups of young socialists in a number of cities have been working together in an organizing committee to launch a national organization later this year. A report on their progress and political perspectives was presented at the SWP leadership meeting by young socialist leader Jack Willey from Detroit. This report was prepared by a commission of party members who are leaders of socialist youth groups from several cities — Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, Minneapolis, and Salt Lake City — during the four-day meeting.

The National Committee discussion on the strike wave had a big impact on the young socialists participating in the meeting. It helped everyone present to see more concretely how advancing communist youth work depends first and foremost on progress in strengthening the proletarian norms and institutions of the party.

Young fighters see many of the evils of capitalism and need to understand how they came about and are perpetuated. More than that, however, radicalizing youth must see a force in society whose resistance sets a moral and political example and points a way forward out of the mire of capitalism — a way to fight effectively and win victories over a vulnerable existing order. Communist workers can help this process by bringing young fighters with them to the picket lines and strike rallies, where they can be part of workers' struggles and learn firsthand about the potential power of the working class and labor movement.

When he joined the communist movement in the early 1960s, Barnes said, radicalizing young people in the United States and elsewhere were drawn to the civil rights movement. This became a mass proletarian

based social movement despite the failure of the U.S. labor officialdom to throw union power into the fight. Revolutionary-minded young people were at the same time politically inspired and educated by the ascending socialist revolution in Cuba, organized by the workers and farmers government and led by its communist leadership.

Today, the SWP leader said, young people can and will be attracted to the growing working-class resistance. Through it, fighters already active in young socialist groups will join with experienced SWP members to reach out to more young workers and students and win them to the communist movement.

The politicization among young people is itself a reflection of underlying shifts in class society, Barnes noted. "Youth, if they are to move in a progressive direction as they radicalize, must recognize, somewhere in the class structure of society, a powerful social force that — even if in a partial and unclear way at the outset — is organizing resistance to what the ruling class is doing here and around the world.

"If not," he said, "all youth radicalizations go the same way. They go toward nihilism, they go toward deep hatred that has no clear class orientation. Under these conditions, over time, some radical youth, through ultraleft adventures, burn themselves out — or worse. Others veer off in a right-wing direction. Most come to terms with capitalist society, its institutions, and its blandishments as they grow older."

"The act of organizing a nationwide young socialist organization is an enormous political challenge," the SWP leader said. "Young people have to have a reason to organize. They won't understand the need for organization unless they start seeing some things in the world they didn't understand before. That gives them a reason to organize in a different way than before — where their actions have real consequences that they take responsibility for." For this to begin happening, young people need to see the working class in struggle, he said, and see the most conscious, organized, communist component of that class revitalizing its norms and institutions to be part of these fights.

Willey and other participants in the SWP leadership meeting explained that young socialists are making it a priority to get to the picket lines and labor rallies with other workers and youth in the coming weeks. They will bring with them other young people they are meeting in abortion clinic defense activities, antiracist marches, protests against the U.S. ban on travel to Cuba, and other political activities this summer.

Defending the socialist revolution in Cuba

A third commission worked during the SWP National Committee meeting to prepare a report on expanding the party's activity in defense of the socialist revolution in Cuba. It was made up of party and young socialist leaders from around the country who are involved in committees and projects opposing the U.S. government trade embargo and travel ban against Cuba.

Washington and its counterparts in other imperialist countries are continuing to drive hard against the socialist revolution in Cuba, hoping to bring it to its knees, Mary-Alice Waters explained in her report for the commission. As we work together with others to defend the revolution, she said, fighting workers and young people can be won

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to its socialist course. Some will become interested in studying the real history and lessons of the revolution in works by communist leaders such as Ernesto Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, and will be drawn toward the prospect of emulating their example in the United States or wherever they live and work. This underlines the importance of getting the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New International*, and *Pathfinder* books into the hands of those who are attracted to the Cuban revolution.

Participants in the meeting from around the country described the party's participation in a broad range of activities in defense of the Cuban revolution, and in local committees and coalitions. One of the immediate tasks discussed by several of the socialist leaders was building and participating in the June 23-30 Freedom to Travel Challenge trip, which seeks to expand opposition to Washington's travel ban against Cuba. The national organization sponsoring the trip has now become a focus for attack by the U.S. government, which just one week prior to the trip froze \$43,000 in its bank account.

Participants in the meeting described the openness among many of their coworkers and other unionists to discussing the socialist character of the Cuban revolution — an openness that increases as workers themselves become involved in fights with the employing class. The strike wave increases opportunities to broaden Cuba defense activity among workers and other young people, Waters said. She pointed to the example of the recent U.S. speaking tour of Cuban youth leader Pável Díaz Hernández. In March and early April of this year, Díaz was able not only to speak on dozens of campuses, but, as he enthusiastically explained, in gatherings around the country he also met and exchanged ideas with workers and unionists.

In Decatur, Illinois, Díaz met with unionists at the Caterpillar plant, as well as with locked-out workers at the A.E. Staley Manufacturing company. He met mushroom pickers who had been through a strike in Pennsylvania. He talked with Teamsters-organized truck drivers walking the picket lines during their national strike. These experiences and many similar ones had a political impact both on workers who were able to see a fellow fighter in Díaz, and on the Cuban youth leader, who got a better picture of the fighting capacity of the working class in the United States.

Common experiences of workers internationally

Meeting participants also discussed the political interest they encounter in the revolution in South Africa. With the victory recently registered in holding the first nonracial democratic election there, and the emergence of the African National Congress as the decisive winner in that election, a new stage has opened in the struggle of working people in South Africa to destroy the legacy of apartheid, advance their economic and social interests, and in the process forge a communist leadership.

As the class struggle unfolds in South Africa, there will be growing interest in books, pamphlets, and periodicals that present the views of leaders such as Nelson Mandela and explain the dynamics of the revolution. Many young people in particular will want to join with others in political meetings, trips, and other activities to get out the truth about what's happening in South Africa.

The experiences and challenges facing working people around the world are more similar today than ever before — in the advanced capitalist countries; in the semicolonial world; and in the workers states, where the imperialist rulers and homegrown wanna-be bourgeoisies are pressing to reimpose capitalist social relations. In every corner of the globe capitalism is drawing more toilers into industrial production, increasing the ranks of the working class.

"In the most fundamental ways, it's more than ever similar in Russia, in Japan, in Iran," Barnes said. "Shanghai is more like Detroit, Mexico City, and Buenos Aires. Workers start identifying the commonality of what we're going through."

In the imperialist countries, with whatever differences in the rhythms of business cycles and concrete circumstances, depression conditions are unfolding, along with the drive of the capitalist class against working people. Leaders of communist leagues in Canada, several countries in Europe, and Australia and New Zealand participated in the four-day meeting and described various aspects of this process.

Exhaustion of 'Thatcher-Reagan' period

In his report, the SWP national secretary noted that what became known in the 1980s as the Thatcher-Reagan pattern has been exhausted.

British prime minister Margaret Thatcher and U.S. president Ronald Reagan "both went after the unions and after means-tested welfare payments," Barnes said, "and both initially registered some real accomplishments for their class in these regards."

"At the same time both pledged themselves to protect non-means-tested entitlements that big sections of the middle classes as well as workers depend on," Barnes explained. For example, the Reagan administration slashed the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, while rejecting the proposals of some of his early advisers who urged that they begin to go after Social Security. Coming on top of the workings of the capitalist system in the late 1970s and '80s, these policies further shifted the

distribution of income between better-off middle-class layers and the working class.

Reagan and Thatcher also relied on declining interest rates to build a base of support. In Britain, Barnes said, "Middle-class people and a lot of workers were talked into buying homes or buying their flats on long-term payments with initially low interest rates, giving them the illusion of security." With the explosion of interest rates in Britain in the late 1980s, however, this course became a sudden catastrophe for millions. Many workers, farmers, and middle-class layers are now being squeezed by the renewed upward climb of interest rates in the United States today as well.

As capitalism's depression conditions deepen, conservative bourgeois governments like those of Reagan and Thatcher run up against bigger and bigger obstacles in their efforts to stabilize capitalist rule. The rulers' profit drive pushes them to cut much more deeply into entitlements that the working class has won for all society over years of struggle. The employers begin to run into working-class resistance to these attacks, but the class struggle has nowhere yet reached the level of intensity where the capitalists in large numbers begin throwing support behind Bonapartist figures or fascist movements.

"The Reagan-Thatcher period was an interlude," Barnes said. "It registered what conservative capitalist governments could accomplish before the rulers are ready to move toward Bonapartist solutions, and this option is being exhausted in the imperialist countries."

Over that same period, Barnes said, the entire framework of bourgeois politics moved to the right, reflected, for example, in the greater bipartisan convergence of the domestic policy of the Democratic and Republican parties in the United States. Social democratic parties and liberal bourgeois parties with strong backing by the class-collaborationist union officialdom adopted more and more of the political approach of more traditional conservative parties — defense of the national currency, balancing the budget, "certain" privatization of state-owned companies and social services, constrictions of union rights, and many others.

"We will most likely see a round of social democratic and liberal coalition governments now," Barnes pointed out. "Growing layers of the capitalist rulers are opting to try these reformed reformers for a while to push through the next stages of capitalist downsizing and 'slimming' of social entitlements. Despite initial expectations of many workers in such governments, their course will largely mark a continuation — and sometimes an intensification — of what came before them."

Leaders of the communist leagues in Sweden and Britain explained how this process is unfolding in those countries. In both, the governing bourgeois parties that swept into office in the late 1970s have become increasingly discredited.

But the social democrats and liberals will not be able to alter the crisis of capitalism, nor cushion its devastating effects on working people around the world. The logic of the capitalist rulers' drive against the working class and against their rivals abroad will continue pushing along a course toward growing class struggle, interimperialist conflict, the growth of rightist and fascist movements, and a concomitant growing tendency toward war.

"The new generation of workers is going to have to learn once again what's wrong with the class-collaborationist social democratic parties and institutions," Barnes said. "The lessons can be quick under explosive social and political conditions, but the working class will not draw conclusions about the social democrats on the basis of betrayals 80, 18, or even 8 years ago. Social democratic parties and governments will betray their promises again, and thinking workers will learn in struggle the obstacles these parties represent."

Most importantly, he explained, increased labor resistance will open up politics more broadly in the imperialist countries. A rise in strikes and labor struggles will be accompanied by the growth of social protest movements, political organizations of all stripes claiming to speak for the interests of workers and the oppressed, and expanding opportunities for political action and debate. It is only through this process of political struggle — which at some point will include more and more clashes on picket lines and in the streets with rising rightist and fascist forces — that communist workers will win a broader hearing for their views among fighting workers and students and accelerate large-scale recruitment to a revolutionary workers party.

The strike wave in the United States today — the first

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The Struggle for a Proletarian Party

JAMES P. CANNON

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stirrings of labor's resistance to the bosses' offensive — is an early reminder to the rulers that they will have to take on workers in battle at every step along the way.

Strengthening the communist movement

Based on its discussions of U.S. and world politics, the Socialist Workers Party National Committee made several decisions to put the party in the best position to revitalize both the content and organization of its trade union work and to strengthen the functioning of party branches and their participation in political activity. The meeting voted to turn the entire communist movement toward solidarity with and participation in the unfolding strike wave.

Communist workers will join with others in their unions to organize solidarity. They will bring coworkers and young people with them to picket lines, rallies, and other activities to support these fights. And they will organize regular, accurate coverage in the socialist newsweekly the *Militant* to get out the truth about these labor struggles to workers, farmers, and youth in the United States and around the world.

The SWP National Committee voted to reaffirm the party's decision earlier this year to take advantage of the increase in hiring to get as many experienced communist trade unionists and other party members as possible into larger plants in basic industry, where a new generation of workers is being drawn into the workforce and the union movement. This is a necessary part of preparing for coming fights in the labor movement and the broadening of political activity in the working class.

When the SWP made its turn to the industrial unions in 1978, Barnes said, party members in their big majority committed themselves to do what was necessary, changing jobs and previous plans in order to go where the new openings in working-class politics led them. When battles opened in meatpacking in the mid-1980s, many communist workers and youth once again pulled up stakes to participate in these fights and in the new opportunities they created for political work in the Midwest and in unionized packinghouses across the country.

"That's what is needed again today," Barnes said. "Given the current round of labor resistance and the hiring that's still under way, our starting point has to be that not one of us is currently working a job that is more important than responding to these new political openings in the labor movement. This is a universal challenge, that all of us — from the most experienced communist trade unionists to the newest party member — can be part of meeting, as we've done before."

In order to begin implementing this perspective, the National Committee called rapid meetings of party cadres who are members of six industrial trade unions — the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, International Association of Machinists, International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, United Food and Commercial Workers, and United Mines Workers.

Members of the United Auto Workers, United Steelworkers, and United Transportation Union had met a few weeks earlier as part of the political preparations for the SWP leadership gathering. Among the tasks discussed and adopted by these meetings — and that will be proposed at those coming up — was a campaign to get into the hands of as many coworkers as possible the new book, *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, which is among the best single introductions to building a revolutionary proletarian party in today's world.

The National Committee also voted to concur with the decision of the editors of *New International* to rapidly publish a tenth issue containing "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War." This April 1994 talk by Jack Barnes, which the SWP leadership is placing before the party membership for discussion and adoption at the upcoming convention, will be accompanied by the party's 1988 resolution, "What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold." Also included in that issue will be a talk by Mary-Alice Waters on "Cuba Confronts a Crossroads in the Fight for Socialism," presented to a socialist educational conference in Miami earlier this year. All three articles will also be published in the French-, Spanish-, and Swedish-language sister publications of *New International*.

Workers involved in the strike wave and other workers and young people attracted to these labor fights and engaged in social protest activities will broaden their scope and become more interested in political ideas, discussion, and action. Through the work of the party's industrial union fractions and branches this summer, many will be introduced to the *Militant* newspaper and its Spanish-language sister publication *Perspectiva Mundial*; to revolutionary books and pamphlets such as *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* and many others; and to the new issue of *New International* magazine.

SWP members and young socialists in cities around the country will be organizing to get as many of these workers and youth as possible to the SWP convention in August. That gathering will discuss the current stage in U.S. and world politics; offer time and facilities to young socialists to discuss the next steps in organizing their work; and decide on tasks and perspectives for building a stronger communist workers movement.

Canada public workers continue protests

BY ROGER ANNIS

MONTREAL — Public sector workers in several provinces in eastern Canada have vowed to continue their protests against government-imposed wage cuts, layoffs, and social service cutbacks even though several strikes or potential walkouts against these attacks have ended or been called off.

On June 6, 3,500 workers rallied in Halifax, the capital of Nova Scotia province. Union officials invited Premier John Savage to address the rally, but workers refused to hear him and booed him off the speakers' platform.

Some 1,500 workers staged a rally and blocked traffic June 12 on the Canso Causeway, a major transportation route linking mainland Nova Scotia to Cape Breton Island.

Savage's government had announced April 29 that it would cut the wages of all public workers by 3 percent and impose a three-year wage freeze on top of that. This sparked weeks of union mobilizations across the province and calls by many union members for a general strike against the government.

Momentum towards coordinated strikes by some 15 public sector unions was broken in late May when members of the Nova Scotia Government Employees Union (NSGEU), the largest of the affected unions, and a union of hospital workers in the Cape Breton region of the province voted against



Militant/Colin McKay

Public workers protest against a 7.5 percent pay cut imposed by provincial government, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, May 11.

strikes. Teachers and nurses, however, voted in favor of strike action.

Workers from the neighboring province of Prince Edward Island took part in the June 12 action. The government of that province imposed a 7.5 percent wage cut on public

workers earlier this year. That sparked a series of demonstrations, including one of 8,000 workers on May 11, the largest labor protest in the province's history.

In Newfoundland, a four-week-old strike by 8,500 teachers ended June 11 when 72

Canada labor delegates debate cutbacks

BY SUSAN BERMAN

TORONTO — More than 2,000 delegates met here May 16-20 at the biennial convention of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), Canada's largest union federation. The CLC represents 2.3 million unionized private and public sector workers.

The convention took place during a fight by government workers against attacks on wages, social programs, and working conditions. Delegates also discussed the recent African National Congress victory in South Africa. Sam Shilowa, general secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), attended and addressed the meeting.

On the eve of the convention, Newfoundland's 8,000 teachers went out on strike against proposed cuts in wages, benefits, and education. Thousands of other workers throughout the Maritime Provinces had participated in protests against similar cuts, including the proposal in Prince Edward Island to cut public workers' wages by 7.5 percent.

Discussion and debate on these attacks permeated the convention floor as well as the corridors. An emergency resolution condemned the government offensive against public workers and pledged "full support" to any affiliates "in their fightback strategies against anti-worker and anti-public sector legislative measures." The resolution demands the governments of Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia back down from their wage rollback demands, and called on the International Labor Organization to investigate unfair labor practices in the public sector in Canada.

Both the provincial and federal governments have promoted their budget deficits as the excuse for cutting social programs and public workers' wages. Most delegates viewed these attacks as a threat to all unions and the right to collective bargaining.

One unionist from St. Johns, Newfoundland, said, "I think we'll all get out behind them [Newfoundland teachers]. This isn't just about public sector workers. Some private sector employers are already trying to impose the same wage rollbacks against us."

While this was the predominant view, others disagreed. A member of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) from Newfoundland said, "We're not going to support Newfoundland teachers, because they didn't support us. They're not real workers."

While almost all delegates rejected the scope of government cuts and their impact on working people, most accepted the framework that workers should share responsibility for the capitalist governments' budgetary problems. Linda Torney, president of the Metro Toronto Labour Council, said, "We don't have a deficit problem. We

have an income problem — unemployed people don't pay taxes." Lawrence McBride, director of the United Steelworkers of America in Canada, said, "We want good services and we are ready to pay taxes, as long as everybody pays their share."

The emergency resolution and remarks centered little on the impact of government cuts on social services and more on the fact that governments, by imposing wage rollbacks and concessions, were violating the principle of free collective bargaining.

Sid Ryan, president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, stated, "[Ontario New Democratic Party premier] Bob Rae should take a look at what the private sector has done. They have restructured industry while involving the unions in how to do that. That's what we should do."

Several delegates argued that the emergency resolution had no teeth and pointed to the need for more mobilizations and strike actions. "This thing will be fought out in the streets," said Fraizer March. "The question isn't whether the workers will be there. The question is whether their leaders will meet them in the streets." March, of the Newfoundland Association of Public Employees, led that union during an important strike in 1986.

One delegate advanced the idea of a general strike. But no one put forward a real plan for drawing the entire labor movement into activity behind the Maritime public sector workers. About 1,000 delegates took part in a lunchtime march to federal government offices to protest cutbacks in social services and unemployment insurance.

Unemployment crisis

In his opening speech, CLC president Bob White said the source of the economic crisis facing workers in Canada and elsewhere was due to "the freedom of international capital and the damage done by the international money speculators." White and other leaders of the CLC pose the problem in reactionary, nationalist terms as a lack of control by "Canadians" over the economic and political decisions in the country. "The only time that this type of corporate power, supported by governments, is controlled at all, is when democratic committed trade union organizations exist and fight on behalf of workers," he said.

With unemployment officially at 11 percent, the fight for jobs was a big topic of discussion. The CLC voted to call on the government to reduce the mandatory workweek to 40 hours as a way to create more jobs. Current federal law and regulations in several provinces allow employers to impose up to 48 hours a week. CLC policy calls on reducing the workweek with no cut in pay.

A heated discussion reflecting divisions

among union officials in several CLC affiliates took place over the federation's long-standing support for the New Democratic Party (NDP). The NDP is a social-democratic party that has had organizational ties to the unions since its founding in 1961, in collaboration with the CLC officialdom.

As the economic crisis in Canada deepens, the NDP like its counterparts around the world has moved to the right and taken more direct responsibility for carrying out anti-labor attacks.

NDP provincial governments in Ontario, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia have been at the forefront of carrying out attacks on the social wage and bargaining rights of public workers. These policies have thrown the NDP into crisis. NDP popularity among working people is the lowest in its history.

Reflecting the anger of tens of thousands of government and other workers, the 700,000-member Ontario Federation of Labor voted last fall to withdraw its support for the Ontario NDP until the NDP government repeals its so-called social contract, which slashed wages and jobs, and worsened working conditions.

Calling for continued unqualified support to the NDP were officials of the International Association of Machinists, United Food and Commercial Workers, and the Communication Energy and Paper Workers Union. Officials of the CAW, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, and other public sector unions advocated the CLC take its distance from the NDP at this time.

The delegates voted for a compromise resolution calling for a two-year review of the CLC's relationship to the NDP.

The convention also voted to establish a special relationship with the 450,000-member Quebec Federation of Labour (FTQ), its affiliate in Quebec and the largest of three union federations in that province. At the last CLC convention, Quebec delegates walked out when the FTQ's nomination for CLC vice president was rejected. The walkout prevented a discussion in the CLC on its approach to the struggle against the national oppression of Quebecois and Native people, which the officials inside and outside Quebec have consistently tried to avoid. The FTQ will now be guaranteed a spot on the CLC executive.

The CLC also passed a resolution reaffirming its opposition to the U.S. embargo of Cuba while at the same time reflecting the traditional hostility of the union officialdom to the Cuban revolution by "encouraging" the development of so-called trade union and human rights in Cuba.

Susan Berman is a member of CAW Local 1286 in Brampton, Ontario.

percent of the workers voted for a contract that will freeze wages for the next two years and permit layoffs of 600 teachers over the same period.

The provincial government in Newfoundland says that the agreement will cut \$10.5 million from salaries. Its stated goal, announced in April, is to cut \$50 million overall from the wages of public workers.

Some 15,000 members of the Newfoundland Association of Provincial Employees and 4,000 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees will be voting in coming weeks on an agreement recommended by union negotiators. The pact will freeze wages for the next two years, reduce pension plan benefits by 2 percent, and impose one and a half days of unpaid leave per year.

The central issue in the teachers' strike was the government's drive to cut education services, with resulting layoffs. Teachers had voted by a 64 percent margin June 2 to reject a similar agreement recommended by their union officials.

In Nova Scotia, 11,000 teachers voted 57 percent in favor of a three-year contract that will cut \$52 million from their wages. A one-day strike by teachers scheduled for June 7 was called off by union officials when the agreement was announced.

Government wage cuts

The settlement imposes the government's wage cut and three-year wage freeze, substantially reduces the wages of substitute teachers, and cuts government contributions to insurance plans by \$3 million. School boards will be able to use financial considerations to lay off teachers this year, as well. Previously, layoffs were only permitted in cases where there was a decline in school enrollment.

Teacher union locals in at least three counties in Nova Scotia took out newspaper advertisements calling on teachers to reject the proposed agreement.

Damien Hall, a community college teacher in Pictou County, said in an interview, "Teachers think that it's a terrible agreement. But they weren't willing to strike because they felt that we would be legislated back to work and do worse in an imposed agreement."

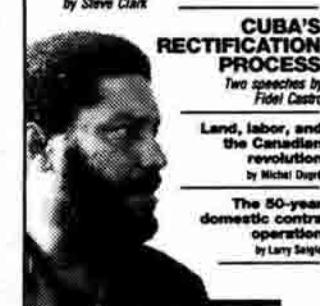
According to Hall, the votes by NSGEU members and by hospital workers in Cape Breton greatly influenced the decision of the majority of teachers to accept the negotiated agreement. "In May, many teachers voted for strike action because they felt they were part of a broader movement against the government. Once that fell through, they weren't willing to go on strike alone."

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New International

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Long Island Rail Road workers win victory

BY BILL ARTH

BROOKLYN, New York — After less than two days on strike, 2,341 conductors, car repair workers, and track workers scored a victory in their contract fight with the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR). This was the sixth strike by LIRR workers since 1960.

The four striking locals of the United Transportation Union (UTU) forced the company to drop work rule changes sought by the railroad, which was the central issue in the walkout. The unionists also won an 8.5 percent wage increase over three years. Peter Stangl, chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), which oversees the LIRR, complained, "I just agreed to pay a ransom to the union. The public pays the price."

Many union members expressed greater confidence in themselves after the settlement. Jerry Finn, a trainman, said in an interview, "I'm glad about the settlement. I'm glad we stood up to the company. I'm glad that people got to see through the smokescreen that the union was holding people hostage through the strike, when in fact the company has been holding the workers hostage. When we go on strike it is the only time we learn that we're so vital to the economy. I'm pleased because we didn't make concessions."

J.J. White, a conductor, also thought the settlement was a victory for the union even though workers did not win all their demands. "When the company went for the work rules, that was too much," he said. "I'm pleased with the settlement because I'm a realist. It's not really a cost-of-living increase, it's not as much as we asked for."

The LIRR carries about 110,000 commuters from Long Island to New York City daily. Government subsidies cover about half of its operating expenses. Many workers expressed hope that the contract with the LIRR will set a



Pickets outside entrance to rail line's Jamaica station in Queens, New York, June 17.

pattern for other MTA contracts. There are 43,700 subway and bus workers, members of the Transit Workers Union, whose contract expires June 30. In addition, 4,900 UTU members at Metro-North, another MTA commuter line, recently rejected a contract that contained concessions similar to the ones sought by the LIRR.

LIRR workers had not had a raise since January 1991; their last contract expired in January 1992. In the years since, the company has eliminated about 400 jobs through speedup. The work rule concessions sought by the company were estimated by the union to result in a 9 percent savings in labor costs for the LIRR. They would also have led to further job losses.

The LIRR sought to eliminate overtime

pay for weekend and evening work for the 600 track workers; the right to force workers to do "incidental work" outside their craft, which would have forced car repair workers to do electrician's work; reduced protection for car maintenance workers from job loss due to technological changes; and lower benefits for workers injured on the job, who now have the right to full pay indefinitely. LIRR officials claim that injured workers now have "no incentive ever to return to work."

The MTA led a public relations campaign on the eve of the strike to turn bourgeois public opinion against the union. Newspaper articles grimly predicted gridlock in Manhattan. School buses with no air conditioning were reserved to haul commuters from Long Island to parking lots in Queens,

in the midst of a record-breaking heat wave. Police barricades were set up outside subway stations in Queens to prevent unusually large crowds from forcing people onto the subway tracks.

Prior to the strike, the UTU produced an "Open Letter to LIRR Commuters" explaining its position. "Our goal is to achieve a fair contract which will allow our families to at least keep up with inflation and the regional cost of living," it said. "We hope that this letter helps you to understand that we do not wish to cause any hardship or inconvenience to you . . . nor do we want to stand around empty railroad stations with picket signs in hand instead of tools and a paycheck."

New York capitalist politicians entered the battle on the side of the company. Democratic governor Mario Cuomo said that the MTA should not "use taxpayer dollars to bribe the union and quiet the situation." He accused the UTU of using commuters "as a hostage, to get what they want from the MTA." New York's congressional delegation prepared legislation to force the strikers back to work.

But strikers interviewed by the *Militant* spoke unanimously against any government intervention in the walkout. Many also expressed their determination to stay out as a group over the work rules issues, even though these issues affected only some crafts.

On Friday, the first day of the strike, thousands of Long Island commuters stayed home for a three-day weekend to avoid the predicted disaster. Traffic reports indicated less congestion on the freeways than normal. On Saturday night, the MTA caved in to the union's demands.

But MTA's Stangl indicated plans to continue to go after the UTU. He stated that he wants the federal government "to consider ways of getting commuter railroads out from under the Federal Railway Labor Act." This act forced LIRR workers to endure two "cooling off" periods, two Presidential Emergency Boards, and various other steps that have prevented them from striking over the last two and a half years since their contract expired. Stangl, however, would like to abolish the workers' right to strike altogether. He proposed to bring LIRR and Metro-North workers under New York state's Taylor Law, which prohibits strikes by public employees outright.

The settlement is retroactive to 1992. It expires on Dec. 31, 1994. New contract talks are expected to begin in October.

Jacquie Henderson contributed to this article.

British gov't intervenes in rail walkouts

BY CELIA PUGH
AND HELEN WARNOCK

LONDON — The 10,000-mile national rail network here ground to a halt June 15. Some 3,750 signal workers who are members of the National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers (RMT) waged the first in a series of one-day strikes. A second walkout is planned for June 22. With an 80 percent turnout the signal workers voted by a 4-1 majority for industrial action to secure an 11 percent pay raise. The RMT estimated that more than 98 percent of passenger and freight service was stopped.

The Institute of Management described the impact of the strike as "catastrophic." The work stoppage cost an estimated £10 million (1£=US\$1.50). The stay away was solid. Union officials, however, organized no pickets, rallies, or campaign of solidarity.

In the last decade rail workers, like other workers in Britain, have faced job loss, speedup, longer hours, deteriorating pay, and unsafe working conditions. Signal workers pay has fallen behind other workers. For a basic 39-hour week they receive between £146 and £226.

In 1980 there were 8,900 signal workers. Now there are 4,600. With computerized consoles and electronic signals, a signal operator can control more than 15 miles of track, dozens of junctions, and up to 15 trains simultaneously traveling at high speeds in different directions.

The signal workers are employed by Railtrack, one of the 25 separate business operations set up by the government in April to replace the British Rail network. This is the first step towards the privatization of the rail industry, shares of which will be sold on the stock exchange. Each operation is under government pressure to limit state funding and cut the cost of maintaining the rail system. Railtrack has taken over track, stations, and operating companies.

Before the strike Railtrack negotiators offered a 5.7 percent raise tied to productivity changes. Union negotiators were prepared to discuss this. Then top government officials, including Transport Secretary John MacGregor, stepped in to block the offer. Railtrack managers were warned to keep within a government target of 2.5 percent for public sector pay hikes. Red-faced bosses claimed that a 5.7 percent offer was never made but was an informal suggestion of an

overzealous junior manager."

British prime minister John Major denounced the strike as "selfish, outmoded, and unnecessary." The three contenders for the Labour Party leadership, following the death of John Smith, refused to express support for the strike.

The strike made an impact on other workers. On the day of the walkout, delegates to the annual conference of the Associated Soci-

ety of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen voted to reject their union officials' recommendation to accept a 2.5 percent pay offer. They voted for a 5.7 percent claim in line with the initial Railtrack signal workers' offer and will consider a ballot for industrial action.

Celia Pugh is an RMT member at London Underground. Helen Warnock is an RMT member at British Rail (Infrastructure).

Canadian Pacific rail workers prepare to strike

BY JON HILLSON
AND CHRIS NISAN

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — Canadian Pacific railroad workers here are preparing for a strike in the Midwest that has the potential to tie up freight traffic across the region.

Workers emerged from a sizable meeting of the United Transportation Union (UTU) June 15 where they discussed strike plans. The National Mediation Board had announced its decision a day earlier to release the union and management from bargaining restrictions, setting up a July 14 deadline.

The countdown was triggered by the bosses' refusal to agree to binding arbitration, which union officials had accepted. On July 14, the company can impose work rule changes.

Topping the Canadian Pacific's (CP) union-busting wish list are the right to contract out work without conditions, eliminate job categories, create part-time work, and reduce overtime pay by 25 percent. The company is also seeking greater flexibility in forcing transfers to other locations, a 15 percent wage cut, and a 10-year progression for new employees to the base wage.

The mood of the rail unionists at the St. Paul terminal, the Canadian Pacific's U.S. hub, was angry and upbeat after the union meeting. Strike talk and debate is part of daily work.

"After being trashed for years, we're finally going to get to do something," one veteran UTU member said.

The railroad workers have secured an International Association of Machinists hall for a July 11 UTU/Family support rally on the eve of the strike deadline, and have begun to build support for it in the labor movement here.

A delegation of CP rail unionists was warmly received at a meeting June 22 of UTU Local 1000, representing Burlington Northern (BN) workers. The BN uses Canadian Pacific's main track on its eastern runs.

The dispute effects more than 1,500 UTU members employed in the United States by the Montreal-based carrier, the sixth largest in North America. Nearly 350 UTU members work at the St. Paul terminal.

Canadian Pacific is demanding yard switching and road crews be slashed to one person from the current two. Top UTU negotiators state acceptance of conductor-only crews on the road, but so far oppose the cut for yard jobs.

Dave Gay, a switchman for 23 years, rejects the one-person crew. "To [the CP], it's just a question of dollar signs," he said. "For us, it's a question of life or death. [The CP's] insistence on this proves they don't care about us. If we accept this contract, I'd be ashamed to come to work."

The rail bosses want to increase pay differences between generations of hires, creating a third tier of lowest-paid members, who began work in the past year during the railroad's biggest hiring ever.

Don Rochhalter, a switchman for four years, said he wants "equal pay for equal work, so we don't have two classes of citizens. [The CP] wants that gap further and further apart, along with a third class. That's totally wrong."

The railroad's proposed wage increases and bonuses don't come close to lost income since 1988. "We will not take anything less," Jeff Grab, a switchman for 17 years said, than that mandated in the national rail contract of 1991 in the aftermath of a 19-hour strike. The CP's offer leaves workers up to

\$25 a day below this level.

Recent hires have also begun to step forward. They work for 75 percent of the wage rate, don't reach base pay for five years, and stand to be laid off if the CP prevails.

"This job is very important to me," said Lisa Coutreau, who just got off the railroad's six-month probation. "I've got three kids to take care of. I don't know a lot about unions, and I'm still learning. But I think we have to band together, fight this thing and win."

Discussion of the potential strike among the recent hires, including a new class of 16 trainees who began instruction June 14, is the number one topic. A union representative recently addressed the group, issuing a welcome to the trainees to participate in strike activities.

In a June 14 letter to the CP's 4,700 U.S. employees, Patrick Pender, the CP's chief operating officer stated, "Managers have been preparing for some time to continue operations in the event of a work stoppage," presumably with supervisors, non union office personnel, and probationary employees.

"No one here," a trainee said, "is going to cross a picket line."

Some better-off senior workers, accustomed to UTU contracts that offer bribes in the form of buyouts and perks in exchange for concessions on work rules and safety, are still hoping they can vote on a settlement that will reward them individually. But many workers are gearing up for a serious fight to defend their jobs, limbs, and lives collectively.

Jon Hillson and Chris Nisan are switchmen on the Canadian Pacific railroad in St. Paul and members of UTU Local 1882.

Allegheny Ludlum workers make gains through 10-week strike

BY TONY DUTROW
AND MICHAEL PENNOCK

PITTSBURGH — Members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) went back to work at Allegheny Ludlum Steel on June 9 with a tentative contract agreement. They had been on the picket lines for 10 weeks.

"Overall, from what I've seen, it looks pretty good," said Gene Phillips, a steelworker at the Vandegrift plant. "The strike got the company to give something for the first time."

"If you compare this with other contracts, it's the best in the industry," said Dennis Shutak in an interview. Shutak is recording secretary of USWA Local 1196 in Brackenridge, Pennsylvania, and a member of the union negotiating committee.

Dave Speedy, who works at the plant in Leechburg, Pennsylvania, wanted to reserve judgment on the contract as a whole. He felt going back to work before voting "made it hard to think straight about the contract." He said one reason for his misgivings is that a "good percentage of my mill hasn't been called back to work yet."

"There's been a 180 degree shift in the bosses' behavior towards us since the strike," Speedy said. "One boss who was a salaried scab told me, 'I don't know how you guys do this eight hours a day.'"

The new pact runs for four years, not the five to six years agreed to with other major steelmakers in the last round of contract talks. Other contracts all included a single 50-cent wage increase plus bonus payments of \$3,000 to \$4,000 spread over the life of the agreement.

The Allegheny pact increases wages by about \$1.50 per hour, almost doubles pensions for future retirees, protects current health benefits, improves vacation scheduling, includes a \$3,000 signing bonus, gives workers a higher percentage in the company's profit-sharing scheme, and addresses the issue of "cycle time."

Wages will go up 25 cents an hour in April 1995, 2 percent in July of both 1995 and 1996, and 3 percent in July 1997. At job class 12, which is in the middle of the wage scale, this works out to \$1.44 an hour over four years.

Workers make gains on 'cycle time'

On June 1 the two sides announced agreement on noneconomic issues. This included the "cycle time" issue, or as the USWA put it, the "disruption of work life" issue. Under this concept workers' schedules are tied to the pace of orders for steel. The result has been horrendous work schedules, cancelled

vacations and days off, and forced overtime at the last minute.

Cycle time problems will be referred to joint management-union committees that will study problem areas. Workers will also receive four hours pay for each violation of various categories of changes in the posted schedule.

Some workers at the contract explanation meeting of Local 1196 wondered if this would really solve the problem or if management would just end up paying more in penalties.

A major issue for striking workers was the substandard company pension plan, compared to other steelworkers in the United States. Before the strike, a worker who retired after 30 years on the job got a minimum monthly check of about \$780 at age 55. As recently as week nine of the strike, the company offered to improve this to a whopping \$817.

Don Graham has 22 years at Brackenridge. He said in an interview that under this new contract the pension increases to a monthly minimum of \$1,500 at age 55 after 30 years of work. This is in line with pensions at U.S. Steel and other major producers. "Even if there was no wage increase in the tentative agreement," Graham said, "they doubled my pension and I'm very satisfied with that. This is what I was most worried about."

John Choltko, a 16-year maintenance man at the Brackenridge plant, is leaning



Militant/Steve Craine

USWA Local 1196 members picket Allegheny Ludlum in Brackenridge, Pennsylvania.

against the contract. "Those who are already retired will get no increase in their pension. My father retired in 1985 and he has to pay medical insurance copayments, which have gone up dramatically."

As part of the contract, the company will also begin increased payments to the fund that pays the workers' pensions. Currently this fund is one of the most underfunded pension plans of any major U.S. corporation.

There will be no union-approved member of the corporate board of directors. USWA officials pushed this in other major steel contracts, but withdrew this demand the night before the strike began.

Throughout the walkout the picket lines remained solid. No strikers crossed to go

back to work. Kim Graham, wife of striker Don Graham, said her "husband, father, and grandfather all worked for the mill. We had to stand up to Allegheny Ludlum."

"The Valley News said we were riding around on yachts in the river and living high on the hog with our big mill wages. But the rest of the community kept supporting us," she said.

Some 3,200 steelworkers in Pennsylvania and 300 in New York, Connecticut, and Indiana will vote on the contract by mail ballot in July.

Tony Dutrow is a member of USWA Local 3196 in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania. Michael Pennock is a member of USWA Local 1557 in Clairton, Pennsylvania.

LTV steelworkers discuss contract

BY RONI McCANN

CLEVELAND — Steelworkers from five locals at LTV Cleveland Works met June 8 to hear reports from their local union officials on a tentative contract. At four meetings throughout the day, some 5,300 members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) locals 2265, 1157, 1098, 185, and 188 discussed LTV's proposals. Many wore stickers that read, "Just Say No to LTV's contract proposal 1994" and "Make it right or we will strike."

Minutes before the contract expired May 31, officials from the Steelworkers union and LTV agreed on a six-year contract and turned the agreement over to local union presidents to vote on. LTV is demanding a flexible scheduling plan that would allow for 10- and 12-hour shifts at straight-time pay. It proposes the union join a "productivity committee" to help eliminate jobs vacated by large numbers of workers ex-

pected to retire in the next five years. The company has offered a single 50-cent wage increase over the life of the five-year agreement, and modest one-time payments to supplement a pension plan that remains one of the worst in basic steel. Workers could get several bonuses of \$500, depending on LTV's profits.

The proposed agreement covers some 14,000 steelworkers across the country. The vote by local union presidents was 10-to-8 in favor. Officials from the largest mills, Cleveland and Indiana Harbor Works near Chicago, and the Warren, Ohio, coke plant, voted no.

Rank-and-file unionists will vote on the contract proposal by mail within a few weeks.

"Right now the only thing that can be done is ask people not to ratify this proposal and force them back to the table," said Tom Klein, grievance committeeman for USWA Local 2265 in Cleveland.

"LTV is in better shape than other national steel companies yet the contract proposal is below the industry pattern," he continued.

Workers throughout basic steel, including at USX, Armco, Bethlehem Steel, and National Steel, have accepted pattern contracts negotiated by the USWA. The agreements provide similar wage increases — a single 50-cent raise — and profit sharing bonuses. At National, workers will get a 1996 bonus of \$1,500 or the equivalent value in company stock if National makes \$100 million in profits.

'We've sacrificed for too long'

"We've sacrificed for 12 years — it's time for them to give in return," said Klein. The unionist explained that workers agreed to give the company concessions in 1983, 1986, and 1987. "The last so-called raise LTV gave us in 1990 brought us back to where we were in 1982," Klein stated. He described the changes in work rules LTV wants, including production workers doing maintenance work, eliminating time for workers to clean up at the end of their shift, and cutting the lunch breaks. Aside from eliminating hundreds of jobs, these changes will undermine safety in the workplace. Injuries and fatalities in basic steel are up. Since January, 13 workers have been killed in steel mills, the same number of workers who died during all of 1993. These figures don't include fatalities among contract workers.

Klein said it was the first time all five locals at Cleveland Works were united and held joint meetings. Each of the five union presidents voted against the agreement as did the five executive boards. With 30 years in the mill, Klein, a seven-year committeeman, said he has done picket duty for many more unions than his own.

Most workers ready to strike

He said workers were ready to strike when the deadline approached on May 31. "We had signs, guys in the mill ready to walk, and 300 people at the union hall. We got the page at three minutes to midnight calling it off."

USWA member Alex Quinny agreed. "We were ready," he said. "We need to shut them down and everyone feels we should. Workers at McDonald's will get a bigger raise over the next six years than we will." Quinny has worked at LTV for 20 years.

"This contract stinks," said one 21-year millwright. "They made \$5 billion last year and they're not in debt, yet they give us nothing. We should get back everything we gave up."

Many workers expressed this opinion. They explained that given the amount of concessions they gave LTV leading up to and during the steel giant's seven-year bankruptcy, they deserve a better offer. LTV is the nation's third largest steelmaker. It emerged from bankruptcy a Fortune 500 company. "We gave and gave and gave," said one worker, "and now when they're doing good they want us to give some more. We should have gone out when the contract expired."

While the mood was overwhelmingly against the contract some workers were not so positive that a strike would be called. "Some people are under tremendous financial stress and they are afraid to be out on strike a long time," said one steelworker. Another explained that in voting by mail, workers are isolated and pressure sets in. Nonetheless, most workers said they planned to vote no.

"A labor standoff is the best fight to get what we want," said another worker with 22 years in the mill. "We've got to show them we can call their bluff."

Toni Jackson is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 26 and is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Michigan. Abby Tilsner and Sevda Ucer from New York contributed to this article.

General Dynamics workers walk out

BY TONI JACKSON

WARREN, Michigan — "You work for 20 years with the promise of Blue Cross when you retire, and then they take it away from you," said a picketer here at the Detroit Arsenal Tank Plant.

Some 150 members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 1200 struck the plant June 20, two days after their contract with General Dynamics expired. Negotiations between the UAW and the company broke down when management refused to budge on its demand for severe cuts in medical insurance.

"All the gains we've made they want to take away. That's what the fight is about," said Joe De Cresenza, one of the 240 members of UAW Local 1193 on strike at the General Dynamics plant in Eynon, Pennsylvania. "They're trying to do away with the unions," the 19-year-old machine operator continued.

Some 1,900 workers walked out at General Dynamics plants in Warren and Sterling Heights, Michigan; Lima, Ohio; and Eynon, Pennsylvania. These facilities are the Land Systems Division of General Dynamics, producing tanks and tank parts for the U.S. military. Workers in Michigan normally build tanks for the U.S. Army, although currently workers were building M1A2 tanks for the Saudi Arabia government, according to a company spokesman. Strikers

here are organized in UAW locals 412 and 889, as well as Local 1200.

Sandi Miller, financial secretary of Local 1200, said the company was demanding that employees pay 20 percent of the cost of their medical insurance. Retirees would be forced to pay \$25 out of their monthly pension checks for health care. In addition, General Dynamics wants what amounts to a wage freeze, Miller said.

Half the workers at the tank plant here will retire by 1996. They are the survivors of massive layoffs in the last decade that reduced the workforce from 2,000 to 155.

"There was almost a panic of people retiring last month," said a picketer, as word spread that under the new contract the company intended to drastically cut retirees' benefits.

"They're trying to make the people who can least afford it — the retirees — pay the most," added another striker. "We'll stay out here until we get what we want."

Toni Jackson is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 26 and is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Michigan. Abby Tilsner and Sevda Ucer from New York contributed to this article.

Workers at GE prepare for walkout

BY DANNY BOOHER

LYNN, Massachusetts — On June 18, more than 1,000 union members, their families, and supporters held a rally at the Lynn Technical Field House. The 15 unions of the Coordinated Bargaining Committee (CBC) called the rally to protest the lack of progress in contract talks with the General Electric (GE) company. Over the last month unionists at GE have held rallies in Louisville, Kentucky; Erie, Pennsylvania; and Evendale, Ohio, culminating in the event here.

At 11:00 p.m. on Friday, June 17, GE workers from the Lynn plant began a 24-hour overtime strike to protest the company's closing of one of the entrance gates. The union explained that this poses serious safety problems and inconvenience to its members.

The 15 unions that make up the CBC include the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE), United Electrical Workers, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, International Association of Machinists, United Auto Workers (UAW), and the United Steelworkers of America.

The contract negotiations will effect nearly 51,000 General Electric workers nationally. The current contract is set to expire at 12:01 a.m. on June 27.

Company demands concessions

The main issues in the negotiations are medical insurance, cost-of-living adjustment including for retirees, subcontracting of work, improvements in pensions, and retirement after 30 years of service at GE. In a press release, IUE Local 201 president Jeff Crosby explained, "GE has made record profits of \$4.7 billion and laid off thousands of workers." Since 1987, more than 5,000 workers at GE's Lynn River Works plant have lost their jobs due to layoffs and downsizing. "In spite of these profits," Crosby said, "the corporate giant refuses to grant a cost-of-living increase to pensioners, who average \$9,000 a year in pension money, and talks about wage and benefit concessions."

Members from 35 local unions organized at GE from the eastern part of the United States participated in the rally. Lorretta Pollard is chief union steward for IUE Local 715 at GE Lamp in Euclid, Ohio. "When I started work at GE Lamp 25 years ago," she said, "there were over 1,000 workers. Now there are 400. The company expects the same amount of production and more from us than it used to take 1,000 workers to do. At Lamp a lot of workers are laid off and there's lots of overtime. They [GE] sub-contract a lot of work to nonunion shops. Most of the brothers and sisters in these shops barely get minimum wage and have no benefits."

Messages of support were read to the rally from Richard Trumka, president of the United Mine Workers of America, and Bill Casstevens, secretary-treasurer of the UAW. Rally participants then marched to the Lynn Heritage State Park where a picnic was held.

Danny Booher is a member of International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union Local 311 in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

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TEXAS

El Paso

Protest Against Operation Blockade and Anti-Immigrant Bashing! All Out to El Paso! Fri., Aug. 13. Sponsored by Open Borders Coalition. For more information, call (512) 452-7453.

Leslie Fay strike remains solid

BY MITCHEL ROSENBERG AND BRIAN MILLER

WILKES-BARRE, Pennsylvania — Blasts from truck and car horns cut the heavy summer air every few seconds on Highway 315 here, as area workers signal their solidarity with the three-week-old strike of International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) members against Leslie Fay.

"We've got to crush those big bugs around here," said Theresa Ely referring to the Leslie Fay management. Ely has worked at the company for five years as a sewing machine operator. She explained that workers at Leslie Fay have had one 25-cent raise in the last 10 years. For Ely, the strike, which began June 1, has been an education. "You start to think clearly in a fight," she said.

Marsha Birtch, who has worked 24 years at Leslie Fay, pointed to some of the support that strikers have received. Students from nearby Lehighton Community College have brought pizza to the picket lines and some nearby small businesses have contributed food and beverages.

Birtch said that Leslie Fay's severance pay offer — \$6,500 for those with 15 years seniority and \$5,000 for one to 15 years — for those workers who would be out of a job if production is moved is totally inadequate.

Striker Pam Flower, said that mechanics,

Aerospace workers strike in Toronto

BY JANET FISHER AND COLIN MCKAY

TORONTO — Aerospace workers at the de Havilland aircraft plant here set up picket lines June 23 and are refusing to accept major concessions demanded by management. More than 1,400 production workers and 450 office employees, who are organized by locals 112 and 673 of the Canadian Auto Workers, are busy signing up for picket line duty.

The company is not offering any wage or pension increases for the duration of the three-year contract. De Havilland is also demanding that several job classifications be rolled together, forcing workers to do four or five jobs instead of one.

"In my opinion, with this job amalgamation proposal, I will be laid off, so I am ready to stay out for nine months if necessary," striker Joe Rudnick said in an interview.

"The company thought we would not go out on strike, but sometimes you have to stand up for what you believe in," said Bob Hamilton, an executive committee member for the factory workers.

According to the June 23 *Toronto Star*, the strike would be a "major blow" to de Havilland, which has made progress "in cutting losses and becoming more efficient." Restructuring over the last few years has reduced the number of workers at de Havilland from more than 6,000 to less than 2,000 today.

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MISSOURI: St. Louis: 1622 S. Broadway. Zip: 63104. Tel: (314) 421-3808.

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 141 Halsey. Mail-



Militant/Barbara Graham
Striking garment workers and supporters on picket line at Leslie Fay plant, Secaucus, New Jersey, June 1.

who maintain the machinery, are still working because they are not part of the bargaining unit.

ILGWU officials have begun calling the job action a lockout, but most workers still refer to it as a strike. Monica Winchilla, who's been a garment worker for 30 years with three and a half years at Leslie Fay, was proud to be on strike. "They say that people aren't striking any more," she said. "But that's not true. People can't take it any more."

At the Laflin distribution plant picket line, ILGWU members sounded the same themes. Tony Gabriel was impressed with the unionists from Leslie Fay-owned SASSCO who came to Wilkes-Barre by bus on June 16. "They're tough," he said, expressing admiration for their vocal activity on the line.

Also at Laflin, unionist Pete Connors took stock of the shape of the ILGWU at Leslie Fay two weeks into the action. "This is stronger than before," he said. "If we do go back, we'll be a lot stronger."

Despite searing heat, spirits remain high on the picket lines at the Leslie Fay distribution center in Morrow, Georgia, south of Atlanta.

Management has obtained an injunction limiting pickets to four at each entrance, so there are fewer strikers on the line now than at the beginning of the walkout.

Strikers report that they are getting more support. Hal Landis, president of Graphic Communications International Union Local 8-M, which has been on strike at the American Signature plant in Atlanta for 14 months, has come down to join the picket lines. Communication Workers of America members who work at an AT&T facility near the distribution center "have been wonderful," several strikers stated. They have brought ice and drinks and come to show their support. Workers from a nearby insurance company have also brought refreshments.

Mitchel Rosenberg is a member of Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) Local 151 in Philadelphia. Brian Miller is a member of the Socialist Youth Organizing Committee. Susan Lamont, a member of ACTWU Local 365 in Atlanta, contributed to this article.

— MILITANT LABOR FORUMS —

CALIFORNIA

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Socialist Educational Weekend. Topics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions in the 1990s; Achievements of South Africa's Democratic Revolution; Ireland and British Rule: The Stakes for Working People. Sat. and Sun., July 23 and 24. Donation: £5. For more information, call London: 071-401-2409; Manchester: 061-839-1766; Sheffield: 0742-765070.

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Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33.

Early retirement — The Navy is offering to give away up to 30 dolphins trained to find underwater



Harry Ring

explosives, attributing the cutback to the demise of the cold war. Our guess is that the dolphins still on the job are being given larger areas to patrol.

Family values — A military court rebuked Navy officials for

their handling of the case of two seamen who admitted stealing credit cards, lying to investigators, and smoking marijuana. One got two years, a \$14,000 fine, and a bad-conduct discharge. The other, Lawrence Garrett IV was restricted to base for 30 days and fined \$880. Garrett was definitely lucky. His dad was secretary of the navy at the time, but quit soon after in the wake of the Tailhook sexual harassment disclosures.

Still doing time — The penitentiary at Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, has a number of the trappings of a "normal" community — laundries, barbershop, library, gym — and an on-site cemetery

for inmates. Even though it is on prison grounds, fellow inmates are apparently excluded from attending burial services. If they request it, a memorial service will be held in the prison chapel.

And maybe vice versa? — "The longer people are out of work, the harder it is to find a job." — U.S. secretary of labor Robert Reich.

Like Adolph did — The Traditional Values Coalition was "thrilled" by that Florida school board's decision to teach children that U.S. "culture" is superior to others. A Traditional Values spokesman said, "The word 'superior'

shouldn't create a hostile environment, it should inspire."

Capitalism, the system that works — According to the Mexican media, a study by the Monterrey Technological Institute found that 59 million people — two-thirds of Mexico's population — receive 10 percent of the country's gross annual income. Meanwhile, fewer than 10 percent account for more than 60 percent of the national income.

Practically homeless — Pointing to the economic diversity in the U.S. Senate, an AP article noted, "A number of senators are multimillionaires, but others have little

beyond their \$133,600 Senate salaries."

Great getaway car — The Rolls Royce Flying Spur will be on the market this fall, but only 35 will be available in North America. The most powerful model yet, the Flying Spur will accelerate from 0 to 60 m.p.h. in less than seven seconds. \$225,000.

Quarterly reminder — When feasible, clippings for this column should be sent c/o Pathfinder Books, 2546 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles CA 90006. Fax: 213-380-1268.

And, again, a comradely thank-you to each of our contributors.

The stock market's role in capitalist production

Over the past century, trade in stocks, bonds, and other commercial paper — the devices Karl Marx called "fictitious capital" — have become integral to the very functioning of the world capitalist system. The 1994 stock market slide has generated new interest and questions among *Militant* readers on the role of the stock market in capitalist production. For this reason, we are reprinting below "The Stock Exchange" by Frederick Engels.

Stock, bond, and other markets for paper securities did not occupy this central place in the process of production, circulation, and accumulation of capital during the emergence of industrial capitalism in the latter part of the 18th and throughout much of the 19th centuries. But this changed before the dawn of the 20th century. While editing the third volume of Marx's *Capital* for publication in 1895, Engels wrote a brief outline for a supplement on the evolution of the stock exchange, which is the article beneath. It can also be found in the addendum to vol. 3 of *Capital*.

BY FREDERICK ENGELS

(1) From Volume 3, Part Five, and especially Chapter [27] of *Capital*, we may see the position the stock exchange holds in capitalist production in general. But since 1865, when this book was written, a change has occurred that gives the stock exchange of today a significantly increased role, and a constantly growing one at that, which, as it develops further, has the tendency to concentrate the whole of production, industrial as well as agricultural, together with the whole of commerce — means of communication as well as the exchange function — in the hands of stock-exchange speculators, so that the stock exchange becomes the most pre-eminent representative of capitalist production as such.

(2) In 1865 the stock exchange was still a secondary element in the capitalist system. Government papers made up the major part of stock-exchange values, and even these were still relatively small in amount. The joint-stock banks, on the other hand, which were already predominant on the Continent and in America, were in England just beginning to swallow up the aristocratic private banks. Quantitatively, they were still relatively unimportant. Even railway shares were relatively weak compared with their present posi-

tion. Directly productive establishments in the joint-stock form were rare — at that time, 'the master's eye' was still an unconquered superstition — and, like the banks, they operated mostly in the *poorer* countries, in Germany, Austria, America, etc.

At that time, then, the stock exchange was still just a place where the capitalists plundered one another of their accumulated capitals, and it concerned the workers only as a new piece of evidence of the demoralizing general effect of the capitalist economy, confirming the Calvinist principle that divine election, alias accident, is already decisive in this life as far as bliss and damnation, wealth (pleasure and power) and poverty (renunciation and servitude) are concerned.

(3) Now it is different. Since the crisis of 1866, accumulation has proceeded at an ever growing pace, and in such a way moreover that in no industrial country, least of all England, can the extension of production keep step with that of accumulation, or the accumulation of the individual capitalist be fully employed in the expansion of his own business: the English cotton industry in 1845; the railway bubble. With this accumulation, there is also a growth in the number of rentiers, people who have tired of routine exertion in business and who simply want to amuse themselves or pursue only a light occupation as directors of companies. And thirdly, in order to aid the investment of the mass of money capital thus afloat, new legal forms of company with limited liability were devised wherever they did not yet exist, the obligation of the shareholders, which was formerly unrestricted, being also more or less reduced. (For joint-stock companies in Germany in 1890, to 40 per cent of the subscription!)

(4) Accordingly, a gradual transformation of industry to joint-stock undertakings. One branch after the other experiences this fate. First of all iron, where gigantic investments are now needed (this was already true of mining before, where this was not already organized in shares). Then the chemical industry, ditto. Engineering. On the Continent the textile industry, though in England still only in a few districts of Lancashire (spinning, Oldham; weaving, Burnley, etc.; co-operation in tailoring, but only as a preliminary step, and to fall back again to the 'master' in the next crisis), breweries (a few years ago the American breweries sold off



Communist leader Frederick Engels

to English capitalists, then Guinness, Bass, Allsop). Then the trusts, which set up giant enterprises with a common management (e.g. United Alkali). The ordinary individual firm more and more simply a preliminary step, in order to bring the business into a position where it is big enough to be 'promoted'.

The same goes for trade. Leaf, Parsons, Morleys, Morrison, Dillon, all promoted. Similarly now already with retailers, and

moreover not only in the guise of cooperation à la C.W.S. [Cooperative Wholesale Society].

The same for banks and other credit institutions, even in England. Immense numbers of new institutions, all limited liability. Even old banks such as Glyn's, etc. transformed into limited companies with seven private shareholders.

(5) The same thing in the realm of agriculture. The enormous extension of the banks, which particularly in Germany (under all kinds of bureaucratic names) are more and more the holders of mortgages, ultimate ownership of the land falling into the hands of the stock exchange, and this still more so when estates fall to their creditors. Here the agricultural revolution in prairie cultivation is impressive in its effect; if this continues, we can look forward to the time when land in England and France too will be in the hands of the stock exchange.

(6) Then there are foreign investments, all in joint-stock form. Just to take England: American railways, North and South (look up the stock list), gold mines, etc.

(7) Then colonization. Today this is a pure appendage of the stock exchange, in whose interest the European powers divided up Africa a few years ago, and the French conquered Tunis and Tonkin. Africa directly leased out to companies (Niger, South Africa, German South-West and East Africa), and Mashonaland and Natal taken possession of for the stock exchange by Rhodes.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

THE MILENT

Published in the interest of the Working People

July 11, 1969

THE MILENT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

FIVE (5) CENTS

July 8, 1944

The pent-up storm of the socialist revolution in Europe burst last week in violent thunder-claps of insurrection over tiny Denmark, where more than 15,000 workers, spearheading the growing movement of the restless masses, defied the Nazi terror machine and, despite savage repression, continued a general strike which paralyzed Copenhagen and compelled the Nazis to lay the city under siege.

According to dispatches from Stockholm there was violent street fighting in Copenhagen and casualties among the strikers numbered more than 700 killed and 1,000 wounded following repeated assaults by the Nazis.

Danish puppet officials, acting on Nazi orders, appealed to the workers to end the strike. Employers' associations joined in the appeal, together with tame trade union "leaders." But neither cajolery nor threats nor the unbounded terror of their oppressors could deflect the workers from their course.

Other centers of insurrection are Aarup, Denmark's second largest city, Helsingør and Kalundborg. All three places were paralyzed by strikes in factories and public utilities. Rural workers on surrounding dairy farms quit their jobs and streamed into town to join the strikers.

The insurrection commenced June 26 when, to the accompaniment of a strike in the great Copenhagen shipyard of Burmeister and Wain, strikers and sympathizers gathered in the streets to demonstrate in defiance of the Nazi-imposed curfew.

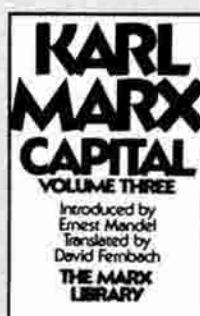
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CAPITAL

Karl Marx

Marx explains that the capitalist system is a specific stage in the development of class society; how large-scale modern industry draws men, women, and children into the factories and into the army that competes for jobs. And how at the same time this produces the insoluble contradictions that make possible the transformation of society into one ruled for the first time in history by the majority: the producers. Volume 1, \$14.95; Volume 2, \$13.95; Volume 3, \$14.95

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"Aversion to the Vietnam war has reached the point among college students that by 48 to 34 percent a cross section of just-graduated seniors say they 'respect those who refuse to go into the armed forces when drafted.' This marks a sharp reversal from a year ago when seniors then said by 50 to 29 percent that they would 'respect such draft resisters less.'"

The radicalization Harris discovered was clearly the result as well as the cause of the massive campus protests that swept the country last year. Harris found that only seven percent of the students questioned actually opposed the protests.

The "potential for student activism has not begun to be tapped," Harris stated. "It is likely to accelerate rather than decline."

All out for UAW strikers!

Now is the time for the entire labor movement, young people, and working farmers to pull out all stops and organize a massive solidarity campaign in support of the 14,000 striking United Auto Workers (UAW) members at Caterpillar. The stakes are getting higher in this fight as the company begins to hire replacements. But the opportunities for a victory for labor are better than in many years.

Caterpillar is the world's largest maker of earth-moving equipment. When the bosses went after the union in 1992 — threatening to call in scabs if a five-month militant strike was not ended — they hoped to inflict a crushing blow to the UAW, drive up productivity, increase their profits on the backs of the workers, and beat out the competition, primarily Komatsu in Japan.

When the union members returned to work, management thought it was well on the road to success. But the workers went back with their union and fighting spirit intact. For two years they have continued their struggle, taking their T-shirts and balloons onto the shop floor as they fought day-to-day against the company offensive. Since September, there have been 10 unfair labor practice walkouts over questions of basic democratic and union rights on the job — the right to wear union buttons and T-shirts, to discuss union issues with coworkers, or hang placards with union slogans.

By the time the first contingent of strikers marched out of the foundry in Mapleton, Illinois, on June 20 — almost 24 hours before the strike deadline — the workers at Caterpillar were battle-tested warriors.

Also on the side of the Caterpillar workers and their allies are thousands of other strikers battling the employers across the country today. From members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union at Leslie Fay to UAW members at General Dynamics, working people are telling the bosses they've been jerked around enough.

Help get the 'Militant' around

From the thousands of United Auto Workers members who said "no" to the bosses' demands at Caterpillar and General Dynamics to the garment workers who walked out at Leslie Fay, there is a strike wave sweeping the United States.

We're asking our readers to respond to this by stepping up sales of the *Militant* now to get out the stories of this working-class resistance, build solidarity with these fights, and introduce the socialist press to strikers and the workers and youth they inspire.

The *Militant* gives fighting workers and youth a view of the broader class struggles they are part of with fellow toilers around the world — those fighting to defend the Cuban revolution, workers and farmers in South Africa, postal employees in Germany, and factory workers on the southern tip of Argentina, among others.

It is an invaluable tool to link up these struggles and help develop the kind of solidarity necessary to strengthen the working class. The *Militant* gives fighting workers and young people insight into the reasons the employers continue to demand cuts in wages and benefits, intensify speedup, expand overtime, and lay off workers at the same time they are increasing production and profits. They are doing so in order to take back enough market share from their capitalist rivals — a fierce competition that can lead to more wars — and begin hiring workers to produce a lot

Teamster-organized UPS workers, truckers, Long Island Rail Road employees, and Allegheny Ludlum steelworkers all scored victories after recent strikes. A blow against Caterpillar's union busting will be a powerful shot in the arm for the oppressed and exploited the world over.

An international campaign in solidarity with the striking Caterpillar workers is now possible and necessary. Union locals can send reinforcements to the picket lines. Farmers can be organized to drive their tractors there. Unionists, students, and other youth can head to Aurora, Peoria, Decatur, Mapleton and Mossville, Illinois; York, Pennsylvania; and Denver, Colorado, to join the battle and bring back firsthand reports — sometimes by strikers themselves — to public solidarity meetings, union events, student gatherings, and other forums. This can be a worldwide effort, involving workers at Caterpillar plants from Belgium to Japan and South Africa, and thousands of other unionists and youth.

The Caterpillar workers have proudly taken their place in the front lines of the battle against the employers' offensive. Their fighting experience combined with the united action of the entire labor movement and a broad solidarity campaign can send a powerful message to the bosses, pushing back their attack and strengthening the entire working class. A victory for Caterpillar workers will make it more likely that unionists from General Dynamics to Leslie Fay and de Havilland will beat back their bosses as well. This kind of fight will also give a powerful hand to those fighting to defend the socialist revolution in Cuba, advance the democratic revolution in South Africa, give impetus to the struggle to defend women's rights, and oppose racism and police brutality.

All out in support of the striking UAW workers!

Organize a massive solidarity campaign!

Join the fight to defeat Caterpillar!

of goods to make a lot of profits.

Bosses in major industries are hiring after successfully edging out their competition. A new generation is entering the workforce in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and elsewhere. The energy and openness these youth bring into the workplace can strengthen the unions and spur other workers to resist the bosses' drive. These young workers, and many older ones, are more receptive to new ideas. Let's get the *Militant* in their hands.

The rise in workers' resistance gives radicalizing youth a glimpse of the potential vulnerability of this hated capitalist system as well. Young readers who are out of school for the summer can order a bundle of *Militants* to sell to workers and activists in their towns, or join *Militant* salespeople in their area to get the paper out.

Others can order bundles of papers to sell to coworkers, take to abortion clinic defense actions, events welcoming the Freedom to Travel challengers back from Cuba, and to the campuses.

Getting the *Militant* around as broadly as possible this summer, and winning many new subscribers, will spread the message of socialism to thousands of fighters on the picket lines and will bring hundreds of youth to see that there is a social force that can get rid of the evils of capitalism — the working class.

The Bobbitt controversy

BY SARA LOBMAN

Last month, John Bobbitt was arrested in Las Vegas on charges of domestic battery after allegedly shoving Kristina Elliott, his fiancee, against a wall. This incident is not related to Bobbitt's previous trial. But it provides an excuse to return to some of the important questions raised some months ago by the acquittals of John Bobbitt and his former wife Lorena Bobbitt. These questions are at the heart of the cultural war being waged today by rightist forces against the working class.

On June 23, 1993, Lorena Bobbitt took a kitchen knife and severed her husband's penis as he was sleeping. She accused him of physically abusing her over a period of time. Both were arrested, charged, and tried. John Bobbitt was found not guilty of marital rape in November 1993. Lorena Bobbitt

AS I SEE IT

was acquitted of malicious wounding two months later.

An "As I See It" column that appeared in the February 14 *Militant* made some useful points. It rejected the opinion put forward by some that Lorena Bobbitt's actions had anything to do with advancing the fight for women's rights. And it pointed out that the fight against the oppression of women can only be advanced as part of a working-class fight against capitalism. But the article avoided addressing the most important questions posed by the Bobbitt controversy.

Two miscarriages of justice

There were two great miscarriages of justice in the Bobbitt case. The first was when a jury found John Bobbitt not guilty of abusing his wife; the second was when another jury found Lorena Bobbitt not guilty of inflicting grievous bodily harm on another human being.

John Bobbitt should have been convicted because the facts were overwhelming that he raped and brutalized his wife. The struggles of the last quarter century have enabled humanity to advance to the point where violence and sexual abuse against women, whether within the family or anywhere else, are both socially and legally unacceptable. The only conceivable explanation for why he was let off is that the jury figured he had been punished enough. But whatever happened to John Bobbitt after the rape is inconsequential. It had nothing to do with his brutal and criminal behavior and should have had nothing to do with his conviction and sentencing.

In spite of her successful plea of temporary insanity, Lorena Bobbitt never claimed to be anything but guilty and fully conscious of her actions in mutilating her husband. She even bragged about it. "If I can help at least one person, then what I went through was not in vain," she said in March. "I think men have to have a little more consideration and respect for women," she added.

But working people cannot allow this kind of horrific reasoning to stand. What if she had gone in and whacked off her husband's arm while he slept. Or chopped off some other part of his body? Would that have been all right?

It wasn't so long ago that the ruling class was legally allowed to cut off parts of workers' bodies if they got out of line. Karl Marx, one of the founders of the modern communist movement, points out in *Capital* that 16th century British law mandated that anyone caught in town without a job have half their ear sliced off. Working people have fought hard to pull humanity out of this pit of bourgeois barbarity.

The acquittals in the Bobbitt case put wind in the sails of the rightists who try to portray human beings, mostly those from the laboring classes, as little more than animals who cannot control their sexuality — let alone lead the transformation of society — and therefore must be kept under control at all times. After all, if adult human beings can be excused for consciously mutilating each other simply because they are angry, battered, under stress, or whatever, then they certainly can't be expected to reorganize society.

But this is a lie. The filth and degradation in the world today is a result of capitalism. And the only hope for cleaning it up is a massive struggle of hundreds of millions, led by the working class, to take power out of the hands of the bosses, and replace their barbaric capitalist system with one based on human needs instead of profits, once and for all.

Working people must take the moral high ground. There is no right, no excuse, that makes it acceptable to sexually abuse or consciously mutilate another person in anger or revenge. Anything that implies that individuals are less than fully responsible for their deeds, less than fully capable of acting human, is both a lie and a barrier to the working class accepting its historic responsibility.

Corrections

The article titled "Rightist North wins Senate nomination" in the June 27 *Militant* incorrectly referred to Oliver North as a "member of Ronald Reagan's National Security Council." North was a member of the council's staff, not a member of the council itself.

In the same issue, the picture accompanying the article "Logging bosses exploit workers, ravage the land" shows a mill processing redwood logs. This mill is in California not Canada.

Paris, UN out of Rwanda

Working people around the world should oppose imperialist intervention in Rwanda — regardless of whether the troops march under orders from Paris or wearing the United Nations' blue helmets. The rulers in France, the United States, and elsewhere cry crocodile tears over the more than 200,000 Rwandans who have died during the last two months in a government-orchestrated slaughter. They care as little for their lives as they do for the toilers at home.

The French government, whose troops have now entered Rwanda, says it has a "duty to intervene" in the country. "We are going in to protect threatened civilians, not for war operations or military assistance," Francois Léotard, the French defense minister crowed June 22. But what does the record say? As part of maintaining its presence in "French Africa," Paris has armed, financed, and otherwise propped up the murderous regime of Juvenal Habyarimana and his death squads. When the Rwandan despot was killed in April, his family was rescued from the carnage and welcomed onto French soil.

Paris's failure to line up a single other imperialist government to be part of its invasion force shows the diverging interests of these powers. Washington, London, Rome, and the others, who don't see their investments or their immediate strategic and military interests threatened, drag their feet on participating in a UN military force, while making hypocritical noises about the slaughter.

But it is imperialism itself that is responsible for the horror in Rwanda. As a result of more than a century of colonial and neocolonial rule, Rwanda is one of the poorest

countries in the world today. The Belgian ruling class, the colonial master from the end of World War I until 1962, exacerbated tribal divisions as a way of maintaining its rule.

Imperialist "aid" and intervention is not the answer to the crisis in Rwanda. Working people should demand that all borders be opened unconditionally to refugees fleeing Rwanda. But the only way out of the devastation that capitalism has wreaked on the country is the political mobilization of the workers and peasants, whose interests lie in creating a government that can break with imperialist domination once and for all. There is an example in Africa where a step along this road was taken.

In 1983, the toilers in the West African country of Burkina Faso, also among the poorest countries in the world, overthrew the government. The new revolutionary regime, led by Thomas Sankara, mobilized the population to tackle the heritage of underdevelopment, including fighting to improve food production, education, health care, housing, and the environment. Women, peasants, and youth were encouraged to form organizations to fight for their rights. The revolution embraced the example of socialist Cuba. The Sankara government was overthrown in a 1987 coup, but its example remains a beacon for the toilers of the world and points the way out of the devastation facing the people of Rwanda today. South African president Nelson Mandela's course in leading the democratic revolution forward in South Africa today is also a guide for Rwanda's toilers.

Postal workers in Germany resist benefit cuts

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

Postal workers in Germany have been conducting a wave of strikes against government plans to cut down benefits for employees before selling off shares of the post office

communications giant — the postal service, and the postal bank were split off as separate entities at the beginning of 1990 to set the stage for privatization. Next year, all three are scheduled to be converted to joint stock companies. □

3,000 workers strike Monon Corp. in Indiana

Some 3,000 workers struck the Monon Corp. in Monon, Indiana, in early June. The strike involves 2,400 members of United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America Local 2323 and 600 other workers still on probation. Monon is the nation's largest producer of truck trailers.

"Our members are fighting for job safety, an end to forced over-

ON THE PICKET LINE

and other state-owned services to private investors. Bonn has announced it intends to turn postal services, telephone and telecommunications, and the postal bank, with their 670,000 employees, over to private capitalists beginning next year. But labor resistance has put implementation of these plans into question.

Negotiations over post-privatization benefits broke down June 9. The following day, as millions of undelivered letters piled up, workers shut down many post offices around the country. Günter Heidorn, a union negotiator, said the government was trying to force "a massive cut in our standards of welfare." About 90 percent of postal employees take home about \$350 a week. The union is demanding that the workers' pensions and health insurance funds be guaranteed after private industry takes over.

After privatization, postal workers will have to negotiate for vacation pay with their employers. Management would also no longer guarantee such things as the 90,000 subsidized rental apartments in Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich, and other cities for low-paid employees.

Telekom — the German tele-

time, and dignity at work," said Larry Tetzloff, financial secretary of Local 2323. According to union records, the plant has a 40 percent annual lost time injury rate — more than twice the national average for this industry.

In the last three years, the company has gone through more than 7,000 employees. The usual work-week is 10 hours a day, six days a week.

Workers on the picket line described a situation several years ago when a worker suffered a heart attack and died on the assembly line. The bosses simply rolled his body out of the way and ordered everybody back to work, not even bothering to notify two of his family members who worked in the same plant.

Records from the Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration reveal that Monon has been cited for hundreds of safety violations in the last several years and fined hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Striking workers have been joined on the picket lines by supporters from the community and former Monon employees. Production is virtually halted. Prior to the strike, the company was producing 180



Militant/Larry Lane

Participants in a June 11 labor rally of 300 people in St Albans, Vermont. Workers were protesting the sale of Central Vermont Railroad to Railtex, Inc. Railtex plans to fire 175 current workers and rehire 78 of them at 15 percent lower wages with no union. Many big carriers sell some of their rail branches to avoid union contracts.

units a day. Supervisory personnel and an estimated 25 workers who have crossed the lines are currently turning out seven units per day.

The company had also been preparing for a strike and had stockpiled several thousand trailers on lots leased from farmers and others in the area. In at least two cases, landowners who have not yet received payment on their leases have secured mechanics' liens on the trailers and have prevented the trailers from being moved. Neighboring farmers have provided electrical and water connections to the strikers who have set up monitoring sites nearby. The strikers have won the cooperation of Teamsters to not haul the impounded trailers.

"Money is not the key issue. I want to be able to work in 10 years, to go home with all my body parts, and I want a life other than at Monon," said shop steward David Purkhiser. Picketer Kathy Cox, a former Monon employee, said,

"I'm a person, not a machine. I'll starve before I go back in there and allow them to treat me that way."

Local 2323 is organizing a foodbank for its members and is planning to send a tractor-trailer load of food to the locked-out Staley workers in Decatur, Illinois. □

Unionists demonstrate against Staley lockout

Some 500 people demonstrated June 5 at the main gate of the A.E. Staley plant in Decatur, Illinois. They were protesting the company's year-long lockout of 760 members of the United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) Local 7837. Staley, which is one of the world's largest producers of corn sweeteners and starch, keeps the plant running around the clock with slab labor.

Fifty of the participants, including a dozen members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 751

who work at the nearby Caterpillar plant, blocked the plant entrance for two and a half hours.

"Stopping production by blocking trucks is purely symbolic," explained Walt Maus, a member of UPIU Local 7837. "The important thing is that we're bringing this fight to the attention of people nationally — to get more support."

As demonstrators chanted union slogans, Decatur police arrested the 50 demonstrators and charged them with criminal trespass and obstructing justice.

"The city fathers in this town don't care about the Staley workers," said Larry Solomon, president of UAW Local 751 and one of the arrested protesters. "Staley is getting a lot of help from its partners." □

The following people contributed to this week's column: Cappy Kidd in Chicago; Charlene Adamson and Shandy Casteel in Decatur, Illinois.

solidarity with the struggle to win his freedom.

Lisa Potash
New York, N.Y.

Malcolm X mural

Twelve in the afternoon. I'm at San Francisco State. It's May 21, 1994. It might as well be February 21, 1965. The mural celebrating the life of Malcolm X covering a portion of one wall of the student union was unveiled two days earlier on the 69th anniversary of Malcolm's birth. Within a few hours after the curtain went up the memory of Malcolm X was assaulted with paint. Blood red. By the time I got there today the blood had already coagulated, caked onto his face in several places.

His right nostril looked as if Mike Tyson might have delivered a blow, the blood having dripped out of it finally levied by his upper lip. The entire right side of his head could've been smashed open with a tire iron, the blood looking as if it had flowed like a waterfall, his ear now cataract by a layer of red. A gash above his right eyebrow let loose a tremendous amount of blood which found a new home splattered all over the glasses he received in prison after having damaged his eyes from excessive reading without proper light.

At the top of the mural hovering over Malcolm's head, almost like a burden that doesn't belong there but can't seem to be shaken, is what is

claimed to be the catalyst of the assault. The Star of David is there with a dollar sign attached to the middle of it. Among the Star of David's company are a few skulls and crossbones.

So once again Malcolm lay dead. This time his grave is on the SF State campus student union wall. This time the ruling class cannot be held responsible. The trigger men this time are those who continue to heap the responsibility of the suffering of one minority upon the shoulders of another minority and those who voice their dissent by vandalizing the face as well as memory of a man who clearly understood, probably better than any one this country has ever produced, that the oppression of all peoples comes from one source — the ruling class. Today I bore witness to an atrocity that further solidifies my belief that you can only die once, but you can be murdered more than once.

David Woodruff
San Bruno, California

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.



Spanish edition of the video, *The Frame-up of Mark Curtis*. Curtis is a longtime unionist and political activist in Iowa framed up by the Des Moines police on phony rape and burglary charges after he spoke out in defense of 17 immigrant workers who were arrested by the Immigration and Naturalization Service police while at work at the Swift Meatpacking plant where Curtis was employed. He has now served more than five years in prison.

Three of the workers at the video showing are from Mexico and hosted the get-together at their home. At the video showing, participants discussed the new opportunities to win support for Curtis in light of the modest upturn in workers' resistance in a number of industries to

the bosses' offensive and the continuing counter-campaign against Curtis, aimed at dividing him from supporters.

Benjamin, age 28, was one of the evening's hosts and is a subscriber to the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*. He is a presser at a women's jacket factory. Benjamin pointed out at the end of the discussion that if "we don't stand up for people like Mark Curtis, we lose some of the fighting spirit within ourselves."

Benjamin was a student activist in Mexico in his late teens and personally witnessed the police actions there aimed at derailing student rights actions. Everyone agreed at the end of the event to send a card together to Curtis, expressing their

Curtis video

Five garment workers, four from two New York Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union-organized factories, viewed the

Vancouver cops attack hockey fans

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Within minutes of the end of the final Stanley Cup hockey championship game on June 14, tens of thousands of disappointed Vancouver Canuck fans poured into the downtown streets here. The crowd reached 70,000, mostly young people.

Using the pretext that the crowd was out of control, the Vancouver Police Riot Squad and a Royal Canadian Mounted Police unit were called in at 10:15 p.m.

Within minutes, 100 riot cops dressed in blue helmets and beating their plexiglas shields with truncheons started firing tear-gas canisters directly at the crowd, indiscriminately and without warning. The police also used pepper spray and plastic bullets.

Ryan Berntt, 19, was shot in the back of the head with a plastic bullet, which caved in his skull. At first doctors did not expect Berntt to live. A few days later his condition was upgraded from critical to serious.

Vancouver mayor Philip Owen and other politicians denounced the youthful participants in the June 14 events as hooligans and trouble makers. Right-wing city councilman George Puil used the event to scapegoat youth. "I think there was a concerted element out to disrupt things," he said. "And it was mostly younger people. I feel there is a certain discipline that has been lacking in society and contributes to all of this."

The cop attack comes at a time when capitalist politicians and the big business media in Canada have been carrying out a campaign supposedly against youth violence and crime. The premier of Alberta, Ralph Klein, wants the death penalty for youth convicted of murder. The Manitoba justice minister proposes boot camps for youth offenders. The *Alberta Report* magazine has called for flogging young offenders.

The Reform Party has been campaigning for longer prison sentences, denial of parole to repeat offenders, and lowering the age at which youth can be brought to adult court. The Reform Party is a right-wing capitalist party in the Canadian Parliament.

On June 5, the Canadian government introduced amendments to the Young Offenders Act in Parliament. The proposed changes would increase prison sentences of youth convicted of violent crimes and automatically send 16- and 17-year-old offenders to adult court, where sentences are longer and are served in regular prisons.

At least 75 people were arrested the night of June 14. So far 29 charges have been officially laid for criminal offenses ranging from mischief and assault to theft and possession of a restricted hand gun, which was seized from one man.

Vancouver cops executed search warrants at local television stations to obtain video-

tapes of the June 14 incident. The cops are also preparing to seize photographs taken at the event by reporters from the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Province*.

More than 200 people were hurt that evening, most needing hospital emergency care.

The cops moved in with force, claiming that the crowd was preventing an ambulance from reaching a seriously hurt youth. There is no evidence to show that this was the case. The June 16 *Globe and Mail* said, "Television footage of the incident and witnesses interviewed suggest the ambulance was able to get the injured man without any attacks by the crowd."

According to the June 16 *Province*, looting and the smashing of glass started when the cop riot squad showed up. Reports indicate that small groups were drunk and disorderly, but this did not characterize the massive crowd as a whole.



Cops in Vancouver, British Columbia, brutalize fan after final game for Stanley Cup.

"There were a whole bunch of police with riot helmets on. Me and my friend were totally scared," Laurie Sutherland told the *Province*. "We went up to one of the police

and said, 'can you please find us a way to get to the Skytrain?' Then he pulls out the pepper spray."

Randy Ludlow, 31, a Surrey railway conductor, was shot in the face with a tear-gas canister when he and his wife tried to flee the melee. Doctors put 30 stitches in his chin to close the hole.

Bruno Marinone, 18, was scared for his life. "Nobody deserves this," he said. "It was after they [the cops] started throwing tear gas that I started to hear breaking windows. The police have provoked this."

The provincial government ordered the British Columbia Police Commission to conduct an inquiry into the June 14 events.

Ned Dmytryshyn is a member of International Association of Machinists Lodge 692 in Vancouver.

Young socialists join picket lines, anti-Klan march in Toledo, Ohio

BY JANINE DUKES
AND CECILIA ORTEGA

TOLEDO, Ohio — Members of the Young Socialists of Cleveland joined three young socialists from Ft. Wayne, Indiana, June 18 for a day of activities here that included showing solidarity with striking grocery workers and joining a counterdemonstration against the Ku Klux Klan.

Members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 954 have been out on strike against the Meijer supermarket chain since May 7. They are fighting for union recognition, wages in line with the current local contracts with other grocery stores, and as one striker put it, "just to be treated fairly." Wages for cashiers in the area are around \$10.50; Meijer wants to pay \$6.70.

At the Alexis Road Meijer, there was constant, enthusiastic honking from drivers passing by. Jill Seitz, 18, explained that public response has been excellent and that even when vacationers came in from out of town on Memorial Day weekend, strikers convinced many to shop elsewhere. Local unionists have also been showing solidarity.

Seitz said members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) and Teamsters attended a rally the Meijer workers held on June 4, which attracted more than 1,000 supporters.

Darlene Gaverick, a lead cashier, added that the Farm Labor Organizing Committee called out its members, most of whom are Mexican, to form a car parade with signs that read "Boycott Meijer." They drove around the parking lot a couple of times honking their horns, then formed a line across the street yelling their support. The Vance security guards hired by Meijer quickly called in the cops, but no one was arrested.

Tim Knaggs, who is 19, said the decision to go out on strike was difficult, because all he wanted from his job was to make a little extra money. He realized, however, that these wages were "probably the best I was ever going to get" and that he would "have to stand up for what I felt was right." Knaggs has also been following the different labor battles in the Midwest, from the UAW workers in Flint, Michigan, to the Toledo sanitation workers who, while unable to strike, organized to call in sick five days in a row.

Antiracist demonstration

The counterdemonstration against the Klan began at 2 p.m. near the courthouse steps where the racists held their rally. The cops set up a "cage" — a fenced-in, blocked-off area into which both Klan supporters and counterprotesters were herded. Cops had organized a similar arrangement at a Klan rally and counterprotest in Lansing, Michigan, in April.

Members of Anti-Racist Action, a group based in Columbus, Ohio, passed out fliers announcing the tentative dates of October 15 to 16 for a Midwest antifascist conference in Columbus. The conference is a response to several Klan activities that have occurred or are scheduled over the next few months. ARA wants the conference to be broad and to provide a forum for discussing fascism and racism.

Young socialists sold the *Militant* and discussed their views on fascism and how to best countermobilize against the Klan. Some of them debated National Women's Rights Organizing Committee members, who argued for a strategy of entering the caged-in area and attempting to break up the Klan rally. The young socialists pointed out that at previous actions many demonstrators

were teargassed or arrested by the cops upon being trapped in those areas. Antiracist fighters need to uphold the democratic right to free speech, they argued. A far better strategy would be to unite against the Klan in actions that the broadest number of people could participate in.

Janine Dukes and Cecilia Ortega are members of the Young Socialists of Cleveland and the Socialist Youth Organizing Committee.

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